

R.H.L.

**JOURNAL**  
**OF THE**  
**ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL**

**LETTERS**  
**VOLUME III** No. 1.

1937

33387



891.05

J.A.S.B.

PRINTED AT THE BAPTIST MISSION PRESS  
PUBLISHED BY THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL

—  
**CALCUTTA**  
1939



CENTRAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
LIBRARY, NEW DELHI.

Acc. No. .... 33387 .....

Date..... 23.1.58.....

Call No. .... 891.05 .....

J. A. S. B.

## DATES OF PUBLICATION

No. 1 ... pp. 1-119 ... March, 1938  
,, 2 (Numismatic) N. 1-N. 145, Index to  
Num. Suppl. XXXIII to XLVII, i-xiv October, 1938

(Volume complete in 2 issues.)

---

The Numismatic Supplement for 1937-38, No. XLVII (No. 2) should be bound after the general number of the Journal; it has a separate title-page and list of contents, and a separate page-numbering marked with the letter N (Numismatics).

List of plates in the general number:—

Plates 1-6 to face page	24
Plate 7 „ „ „	44
„ 8 „ „ „	54

---

List of plates in the Numismatic Supplement, separately numbered:—

Plates 1-5 to face page	N. 50
„ 6-11 „ „ „	N. 92
„ 12-14 „ „ „	N. 138



## PAPERS

	<i>Page</i>
 BANERJI, A. C.	
A Buddha image from Kurkihār ... ..	53
 BHATTACHARYYA, PADMANATH	
Location of the land donated by the Nidhanpur grant of Bhaskaravarmān of Kamarūpa ... ..	45
 CHAKRAVARTI, S. N. —	
A sculptured lintel of Gupta date from Sārnāth ... ..	39
 HARLEY, A. H.	
Abū Nukhailah, a post-classical Arab poet ... ..	55
Abu's-Simţ Marwān b. Abī Ḥafṣah, a post-classical Arab poet ...	71
The child-world, and the child of Araby ... ..	91
 MACFARLANE, EILEEN W. ERLANSON	
The racial affinities of the Jews of Cochin ... ..	1
 SARKAR, SASANKA SEKHAR	
The social institutions of the Mālpāhārīās ... ..	25
 SEN, KARUNAKETAN	
<u>Notes on rural customs of Dināipur District</u> ... ..	33
 SENGUPTA, P. C.	
Some astronomical references from the Mahābhārata and their significance ... ..	101

CP

P



## **The Racial Affinities of the Jews of Cochin.**

By EILEEN W. ERLANSON MACFARLANE.<sup>1</sup>

### THE COMMUNITIES AND THEIR TRADITIONS.

The Jews of Cochin are a small but ancient colony of people who practise the Judaic religion. Tradition says that they came to the Malabar coast in thousands from Palestine at the time of the destruction of the second Temple, 70 A.D. (Galletti, Lawson, C. A. Menon), and that some came even earlier (Day, Logan). These Jews believe that there was a small Jewish kingdom at Cranganore, a few miles north of the present port of British Cochin. They say that their ancestors owned lands and were granted privileges by one of the early Cochin Rajas, and that they lived at Cranganore, or Shingli as they called it, in peace and prosperity for centuries. Sometime not long before the arrival of the Portuguese in those parts the Jewish kingdom was rent by internal dissensions and a family feud among the rulers. The little community fared badly in local wars in the sixteenth century and was finally destroyed (Correa, Day). After this the Cochin Jews were scattered over the State and suffered persecutions and some of the terrors of the Portuguese Christian inquisition which were well known to their co-religionists in Europe but which they had previously been spared under the patronage of tolerant Hindu rulers.

When the Portuguese were ousted by the Dutch in 1663 the Jews, who aided the new-comers, again received favourable treatment which was continued when the British took over Cochin Port in 1795. For over a hundred years now this fragment of a downtrodden, exiled people have lived in peace worshipping God and abiding by his law as given to their forefathers through Moses. They have been left undisturbed to enjoy the proceeds of their lands and of their trading activities.

Even though the total number of Jews in Cochin was only 1,451 in the 1931 census, they are divided into two major endogamous communities each harbouring bitter memories of betrayals, oppression and slanders against the other. The two sects are known as the White Jews and the Black Jews. The former, though very much in the minority, are the wealthier community, better educated, more progressive and better known outside Cochin. The White Jews live in the world-famous Jew Town Street, which was built with the help of the Dutch in 1664, and is one of the local sights for tourists. There are

---

<sup>1</sup> Collaborator in Asiatic Research, University of Michigan, U.S.A.

only a little more than a hundred of them left, for their birthrate is low and many of their ambitious young men have gone to Bombay in recent years. They have one Synagogue next to the Raja's palace in Mattanchery, which was also built by the Dutch.

The White Jews are careful to preserve the purity of their stock and they marry only among themselves, or with an occasional non-Indian Jew trader from outside. Consequently they are highly inbred, and although some of them are swarthy this comes from Bagdadi and Yemen ancestors rather than from Indians (Hallegua). They are regarded as members of the 'White Race' by the United States Government and one of them obtained American citizenship since the World War.<sup>1</sup> They say that they are pure or true Jews whose ancestors came from Palestine and were the ruling class in the Jewish principality of Shingli. As evidence for this they display some antique engraved copperplates which record certain privileges and powers bestowed on a Joseph Rabban by a Raja long ago. These early immigrants, they say, were joined from time to time by Jews from Arabia, Egypt, Germany and Spain who had heard of the happy life of the Jews in Kerala. The White Jews disclaim any native Indian ancestors. They say that the Black Jews are the descendants of the converted and freed Indian slaves of their ancestors. They are rapidly becoming Europeanized in dress and customs. Several of them are well educated and nearly all speak English as well as Malayalam.

The Black Jews numbered 1,307 at the 1931 census when it was recorded that, because of their isolation and exclusiveness, they too are a dying community (T. Menon). Over 900 of them live in Ernakulam and Mattanchery on Cochin Harbour; there are small settlements at Chenamangalam, at Malla and at Parur in north Travancore. They are all decidedly brown-skinned and resemble physically the Moplah Mohammedans (C. A. Menon). Most of them are poor and illiterate, although the boys are taught to read Hebrew. Their houses and huts are built in the Malayali style, and their native speech is Malayalam. Both sexes usually wear a coloured plaid lower cloth (mundu). The men always wear a coloured skull cap; they may wear a shirt or go bare above the waist. Many still have the traditional Jewish side-curls. The women have cotton jumpers with sleeves; they usually place a folded coloured cloth on their heads when out-of-doors. The community has seven synagogues in the region. They are very orthodox, devout followers of Judaism and strict Sabbatarians even though the observance of a complete holiday for twenty-four hours after sunset on Fridays makes it difficult for them to get permanent employment. Many of them are poultry dealers, others have small retail shops. They have

<sup>1</sup> This man belonged to the Zackay family. Hallegua says that the Zackays originally came to Cranganore in the fifteenth century. The name is now extinct in Cochin.

long been famous for their hand book binderies, a trade that is being ousted by machines.

Because they are shy and suspicious and only a few of them can speak English, their version of their own origin is little known. These Black Jews say that they too are true, pure Jews and the actual descendants of the original Jewish immigrants to Malabar who owned the Jewish kingdom (Buchanan, Lord). They blame their dark skins chiefly on more than a millenium of residence in the Tropics (C. A. Menon), as do also the South Indian Brahmins. The Black Jews declare that none of the present White Jews is descended from a Cranganore Jew, but that they are recent immigrants and have only been in these parts for some four hundred years. To support this contention they point to their own numerical superiority, and to the fact that their synagogues are always named either Kadvoobagam or Theckooabagam after the two synagogues in Cranganore, while the White Jews' synagogue is called Parathesi, which is a Sanskrit word used locally to designate foreigners. They claim that the copperplates were taken from their ancestors by the White Jews; or that the originals are lost and the White Jews now have only copies. These claims were upheld by Lord but there is no evidence to support them.

There is a sub-community of the White Jews, locally called the Manumitted or Brown Jews, who are descended from the Indian convert concubines of White Jews. There are now less than a score of them in Cochin. They worship with the White Jews, but there is a strong sentiment among the latter against inter-marriage with them. In the past Brown Jews have sometimes been converted to Christianity, or have married among themselves. The fact that the White Jews call these people Manumitted Jews indicates that the old Jewish custom of taking native slave girls as concubines, converting them and later freeing their children was followed in India. Slavery was not abolished in Cochin State until 1854, when 58,000 slaves were freed (C. A. Menon). Day mentions meeting Jewish slaves of Jews.

Few of the White Jews in 1936 knew that there was also a sub-community of manumitted, proselytized Jews among the Black Jews in Ernakulam who were socially ostracized by the others. The Black Jews declare that there have always been at least two communities among themselves, the Meyookasim or pure and genuine Jews, and the *she-enam* Meyookasim, or non-genuine Jews of low-caste Hindu origin. One of the latter protested to a White Jew recently that they were not allowed into the synagogue, although there were only about thirty of them.

This small Jewish colony illustrates excellently the contagious effect of the Hindu caste system on all residents in India of whatever origin. The social classes among the Jews

became crystallized into castes which would not worship together, interdine nor intermarry. In 1881 the Brown and the Black Jews appealed to the Chief Rabbi for the right of equality with other Jews. They were referred to a Rabbinical decision which was given to Cochin Jews three hundred years earlier on the same question. This judgment will be discussed later for it reveals an interesting and unusual attitude towards what constitutes race. The racial affinities of the Cochin Jews, as it will be shown, are complex.

#### RACIAL STATUS OF THE JEWS.

An anonymous French pamphlet (translated by Miss Gladys David of Cochin) draws attention to a fine sixteenth century manuscript 'The Consultations of Rabbi David Ibu Abi Zimra', which was discovered in the library of the Jewish Theological seminary at Alexandria. This is a long quarto manuscript and contains the reply to an appeal which was made to this great Egyptian Rabbi by some Jews of Cochin. At that time there were 900 families of Jews in Cochin, of which only a hundred were of pure Jewish descent. These latter were poor but arrogant and looked down upon the mixed families, who were influential merchants, called them 'slaves' and would not intermarry with them. The rich but socially inferior class were supposed to be descended from slave girls and Jewish merchants from Aden, Yemen, and Turkey, whose ancestors had been set free or had otherwise obtained their liberty. The question addressed to Ibu Abi Zimra was whether these people were to be treated as true Jews, or as slave Jews, for some of them had no proof of manumittance. Rabbi David gave it as his opinion that all must be considered to be Jews, and those who called them slaves should be punished. A generation later the same question was put to his pupil Rabbi Jacob Castro who died in 1610 (Hallegua).

When the Brown Jews of Cochin appealed to the Chief Rabbi in 1881 for equality, he confirmed Castro's original announcement concerning Jews of mixed descent. English translations of the Rabbi's decision have been published by Lord and by Hallegua. The documents reveal that in the sixteenth century, as now, there were two communities among the Black Jews, Meyookasim (true Jews) and converts or non-Meyookasim. Meanwhile the White Jews refused to recognize any difference between the two and declared that all the others were natives of India, because even the Meyookasim among them were of mixed descent. The Rabbi declared that the Meyookasim of Cochin 'are equal in racial purity to any of the Jews throughout the world'. He stressed the fact that they had always avoided marriage with the sub-community or had disowned any member who did so. But his decision also clearly states that if the

non-Meyookasim will take the Rabbinical bath called *Tabila* they will automatically 'become equal to our Israelite brethren according to the law of the Rabbis'. He, however, reminded them that a Cohen (the priest) is forbidden to marry a convert woman.

That the term 'race' as used by the Chief Rabbi signifies 'people' or cultural group is proved by a sentence in Lord's translation. As a comment on the prescribed marriages between Cohens and converts or the descendants of slaves the decision states 'The observance of such points of racial purity is only a matter of social position; and the issue of the marriage between genuine and converted Jews can be married to priests'. As soon as converts have taken the ritualistic bath or *Tabila* the Rabbi says they will 'no longer be subject to any social distinction', they can marry any Jew and hold any religious distinction. He directs the adult men of the non-Meyookasim to see to it that all their women and children take this bath. From this it is clear that whoever follows the Laws of Moses and adopts the Rabbinical ritualistic practices is a Jew, whatever his or her race.

These communications with the Chief Rabbis were made in the first century of Portuguese domination in Cochin. Ibu Zimra records that it was only after the Portuguese conquests in India that Jews in the West began to know about the Jews in India. The appeals indicate that there were two distinct main sects in the sixteenth century who differed in racial descent, and that there was also a sub-community of converts, just as to-day.

It is doubtful whether a sub-community of native converts and slaves has been kept distinct among the Black Jews through the centuries. When the racial controversy was revived at the end of the last century a section of the Black Jews tried to establish a distinction within the community. Six of the parishes claimed authority over the seventh whose members they said were non-Semitic. After a bitter lawsuit which lasted thirteen years, the Cochin State Judge decided in 1895 that there was no distinction between the parties, and that they both had a similar origin. Anyone familiar with South India will not doubt that sub-castes have existed among the Black Jews, as among all communities. Such sub-castes sometimes base their assertions of superiority on one or two alien ancestors (real or imaginary) of supposedly high social origin.

Distinctly Semitic physiognomies appear among the Black Jews (Plate 4, fig. 17) and are no doubt due to segregation of ancestral types. The Moplah Mohammedans, whom these Jews resemble, are descended from 'Moors' and native women of the Malabar coast. It is noteworthy that there are no Cohens or Levites among the Black Jews. In fact they had no surnames until recently when children took their father's name as a last



name. They say that their ancestors came to India before surnames were adopted (Lord). Among the Black Jews I found that the commonest given name for males was Abraham, with Elias and Moses as close seconds; among the girls Yekara, Sara, Rachel and Esther were most frequent. The favourite names among the White Jews are Elias and Isaac for males, and Esther, Rebecca and Seema for females.

Governor Moens recorded in 1781 that if a White Jew entered a Black Jew's synagogue during a service, the reader retired and the White Jew took charge. This would be a natural action in a socially inferior community. If the Black Jews were the older community it is scarcely credible that they would habitually honour 'foreigners' thus. Visscher also recorded that in the eighteenth century the Black Jews were not a fully privileged class.

The Jews have been a strictly patriarchal people for millenia and they consider themselves to be a distinct race 'the seed of Abraham'. The definition of Jew in most dictionaries is 'An Israelite, a Hebrew. A descendant of Israel and Judah.' Children receive as many genes from their mother as from their father, but in patriarchal families they belong to their father's race socially, whatever the descent of the mother. Kappers points out that the Israelites were mixed even in ancient times, for the prophet Ezekiel records marriages with Amorite women. The Jewish people have wandered over Arabia, the Levant, North Africa and Europe, and whenever they were left in peace for a time they adapted themselves and prospered. Until recently in human history all wealthy people owned slaves. Under Jewish law, as well as the old Indian laws, masters freed their slave women who bore them children. These children would become part of the Jewish communities. Undoubtedly Jews have taken women from the countries of their residence as wives, for both the cephalic indices and the blood group frequencies of Jewish communities in different parts of the world show that the Jews receive genes from surrounding people (Fishburg, Fischer and Lenz).

#### THE WHITE JEWS.

*Historical.*—All the White Jews at present living in Cochin are descended from people who came from the West at various times in the past four hundred years. They are a heterogeneous group of Aschkenasim from Germany, Sephardim from Spain via Cairo, as well as Baghdadis and people from Aleppo, Turkey and Yemen. The Malabar or Black Jews therefore declare that the White Jews are a colony of recent immigrants, compared with themselves, none of whose ancestors ever lived in the Cranganore settlement. A consideration of historical data, as will be shown, can throw very little light on the question,

but some of the customs of the White Jews indicate a continuity with a Jewish culture that differs from that of Jews to the West of India and resembles that from which the Malabar Jews also descended.

Unfortunately the history of Kerala, of which Cochin is a part, is almost entirely conjectural and traditional until the arrival of the Portuguese at the end of the fifteenth century. There are a few meagre references in the accounts of mediæval travellers' and in ancient Tamil works. The only local historical works and records extant date from the seventeenth century (C. A. Menon). The interesting old copperplate grants which are now in the possession of the Syrian Christians and of the White Jews are (Plate 2, figs. 6 and 7) subjects of controversy and uncertainty. Even the date at which these deeds were made varies within one thousand years according to different scholars. Some place it in the year 230 A.D. (Daniel) and others in the 8th and 14th centuries.

Archæological remains show that there were ancient settlements of Christians and of Jews at Cranganore. According to their traditions these 'Syrian' Christians were Brahmins and Nairs who were converted in the first century A.D. by St. Thomas the Apostle. Blood group data from some Syrian Christians of Ernakulam reveal a strong similarity with that of the local Nairs, who of course possess many Brahmin genes (Macfarlane). It is supposed that both the early Christian community and the Cranganore Jews were granted certain special privileges by the Rajas. One of the earliest authoritative records of these plates is in the memorandum of his Malabar administration written by the Dutch Governor A. Moens in 1781. At this time the copperplates of the Syrian Christians were missing and had not been seen since the Portuguese regime. They were found later among the Government records by the British resident, Colonel Macauley, in 1806 (Daniel). Governor Moens records that the Cochin Jews possessed some copperplates which had come into the hands of Ezechiel Rabbi, the richest merchant among them, in 1741. Ezechiel Rabbi translated the copperplate inscriptions for the Governor, who obtained a second translation from a Malayali linguist. The inscription is in Tamil prose containing some Malayalam forms (Daniel). The alphabets used are Vatteluttu and Grantha (Galletti) and every scholar renders the deed somewhat differently (Burnell). The gist of it is that the Raja bestowed on one Joseph Rabban the revenues of a small district, and the right to fire salutes, ride on elephants and horses and to use umbrellas and other decorations in public processions. Some translations also give the Jews remittance of taxes due to the Raja on houses and temples. If the Jews once owned a small principality in Cochin they lost it, probably early in the sixteenth century, and most of the other privileges are not desired nowadays and have therefore fallen into disuse.

Although the Jews no longer fire salutes from a small cannon or mortar, they informed me that this used to be their custom at dawn on wedding days. Governor Moens records that even in his time there was some uncertainty as to whether the copper-plate charter was originally granted to the Jews. Some modern scholars (Venkayya, Daniel) have also suggested that these plates properly belong to the Syrian Christians and only came into the hands of the Jews by accident. Moens pointed out that the Jewish claims are well supported by the fact that no other community is permitted to fire salutes at dawn, a privilege that was otherwise reserved solely for the native princes. He records that the Jews of his day were allowed to fire such salutes, but he omits to say whether both the Jewish communities, Black as well as the White, exercised this privilege.

The tradition of a Jewish principality at Cranganore cannot be verified from authentic records although it is mentioned by Gasper Correa. The Jews' own account of their history is given in the Jewish Encyclopedia (1909) by Mr. Naphthali E. Roby who is the present curator of the treasures of the Synagogue, including the copperplates. He is a direct descendant in the fifth generation from the eighteenth century merchant Ezechiel Rabbi. According to their traditions the Jews possessed a small autonomous principality at Angivanam or Shingli, a suburb of Cranganore, where they lived and prospered from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries. The family of the first Jewish chief, Joseph Rabban, became extinct and two brothers who belonged to a wealthy family assumed the rulership. Dissentions and jealousies between the two led to internal strife and riots. The ancestors of the present Black Jews also took one side and demanded equality and the right of inter-marriage. A massacre of the Black Jews by Nair soldiers was planned by the Whites who were outwitted and fell into their own trap. However the treachery of the Black Jews' party was ruthlessly revenged by the other faction with the help of local princes, and the former were driven out of Shingli by force in 1344. If these events actually took place it is probable that both factions contained some purely Semitic Jews and some Jews partially of Indian descent, and that the wealthiest families among the Semites remained in Shingli. An old Synagogue called the Cochin Angandy was built by the Black or Malabar Jews in 1345 (Lord, Roby). When this property was dismantled it was divided between the seven remaining yogakars (congregations) of the Black Jews (Lord). The Black Jews have used the fact that the White Jews had no share in this old synagogue as a proof that the latter had not arrived in Cochin State in 1345.

The White Jews claim that they remained on in Shingli and lived peacefully until the arrival of the Portuguese (Roby), when they suffered attacks both from the Portuguese and the

Moors (Muslims). There is plenty of historical evidence for persecutions of Jews by the Portuguese. In 1513 Albuquerque informed the King of Portugal in a letter that many Jews were coming to India from Spain and Portugal, and asked permission to 'exterminate them one by one' (Danvers). In the following year many Jews emigrated from Cranganore to Goa, Parur (North Travancore) and Southe (near British Cochin). They built a Synagogue at Southe which is now in ruins. The Jews and Christians remaining at Cranganore were again attacked and their houses were looted by the Muslims. The Nairs came to the aid of the Syrian Christians, and the Portuguese successfully drove the remnant of the Jews away from Cranganore in 1565 (de Paiva, Roby). These refugees apparently joined the community at Southey. They were poor and their troubles had not ended for the first Portuguese Archbishop arrived on the West Coast of India in 1560 bringing the Inquisition bent on suppressing the Jews (Danvers). The poor race-proud Jews about whom the wealthier Malabar Jews complained to Rabbi David Ibu Abi Zimra in the second decade of the 16th century were probably the White Jews who left Shingli during the regime of Albuquerque, many of whom may have been Sephardim from Iberia.

When the last of the Jews left Cranganore in 1565 they went to Cochin (port) and received a generous welcome from the Raja who gave them land immediately to the south of his palace in Mattancherry in which to build their houses and Synagogue. The Black Jews say that these were not Jews from Cranganore but some immigrants from the west. There is nothing against both accounts being true, for Jewish merchants would certainly help their unfortunate refugee co-religionists. It is in fact recorded that when the White Jews built their synagogue in 1568, all the expenses were defrayed by a rich Turkish lady, Seethi Mothi, wife of a Sephardim Samuel Castil (Roby). The Black Jews tried to prevent the building of this synagogue and to force the White Jews to worship with them and to intermarry with them. The Black Jews again appealed to the chief Rabbi at Alexandria (Roby), but at the request of the White Jews the Raja commanded the Blacks not to hinder the construction work. The Jews continued to suffer religious persecution at the hands of the Portuguese and when the Dutch appeared and unsuccessfully besieged the Fort at Cochin in 1662, the Jews helped them with provisions and covered their retreat. When the Portuguese discovered that the White Jews had aided their enemy they revenged themselves by burning and looting the Jewish quarter and slaughtering many Jews. All their records were destroyed at this time and they had to flee into the country for safety. The Black Jews were not punished, therefore they had presumably not aided the Dutch.

In 1663 the Dutch captured Cochin (port), they destroyed the Portuguese Churches, looted their houses and drove them out. The White Jews returned from hiding and were welcomed by the Dutch who helped them to rebuild Jewtown Street and the Synagogue. The Black Jews again agitated for equality with the White Jewish minority. A White Jew Shemthob Castiel visited the Dutch Governor-General in Ceylon and complained about the Black Jews. He was given authority over them and also over the White Jews, and the Raja of Cochin was directed to uphold him. When he returned he punished the Black Jews severely, apparently imprisoning and killing the most troublesome among them, and peace was restored.

There is an interesting account of the Cochin Jews written in 1687 by a Jewish merchant Moses Pereira de Paiva who came to Cochin on a visit to his co-religionists with three other Jewish merchants from Amsterdam in 1686. This has been republished in Portuguese (Amzalak) with an introduction containing data from other Portuguese records. A Portuguese priest in Cochin recently translated this pamphlet for Mr. Shab dai Koder, who kindly allowed me to read it. De Paiva in his 'News of the Jews of Cochin' records the cordial welcome that he received from the Jews. He was royally entertained by David Raby of the White Jews and was feasted by the Jews in Ernakulam. These latter he records were 'Jews from Malabar who have two Synagogues there'. He notes that the White Jews were brown, but that this must have been due to the climate, for 'they are entirely separated from the Malabaries of rank because it is a great disgrace to intermarry with them. They do not eat of what the Malabaries kill, nor do they celebrate minyan in their company; whereas they observe in all ways the same rites and ceremonies as the others'. He was told that the 'Malabaries' (Black Jews) were descended from slaves and that they were mixed with Canaanites, 'Guerim and Ismaelim'. The White Jewesses were kept in seclusion but as a great favour he was allowed to see the two young daughters of David Raby, whom he records were 'Elegant, white and beautiful'. De Paiva records a few minor details in Jewish ritual in which those of Cochin differ from other Jews. Among these he mentions the fact that they enter the Synagogue bare-footed and that the women do not cover the head. De Paiva was shown the copper-plates and obtained a translation of the inscription. He also met an old lady and two men who said that they were descended from the last King of Cranganore, one Joseph Azar. He gave a list of the most important White Jew families, several of whom are still represented in Cochin, two of them (Zackay and Susany) are noted as having been among the first families of Cranganore. The name Raby has now become Roby, and Aleva has become Hellegua. The other Jews in 1686 were descendants in the second, third or fourth generation from men who had come from



Germany, Allepo, Damascus, Spain, Constantinople, Shiraz (Persia), and Jerusalem. This again demonstrates the mixed origin of this Jewish Community. There is no basis for the assertion that they belong particularly to the tribe of Manasseh (Day).

The Jews enjoyed a period of prosperity under the Dutch and were received socially by the best Dutch families. In 1795 the British took Cochin, and although the Jews received favourable treatment their trade began to decline and was largely taken over by Mohammedan and Hindu merchants. In 1808 there was a revolt in Cochin and Travancore against the British. The first British Resident, Colonel Macauley, escaped from the insurgents and hid in Jewtown in the house of Naphtali Rattenberg until help was obtained. For this favour Rattenberg's property was given tax free to him and his heirs, and Macauley presented the Synagogue with silver lamps and two small silver crowns for the scrolls of the law.

#### PECULIAR CUSTOMS OF WHITE JEWS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE.<sup>1</sup>

Although the White Jewish community in Cochin has been augmented by Jews coming from the west in the past four hundred years, they believe that these immigrants joined a group of Jews who had lived for centuries near Cranganore. The following customs which are peculiar to all the Jews of Cochin but unknown in Jewery elsewhere tend to uphold this tradition.

1. Their speech in the home is Malayalam, the vernacular speech of the Malabar Coast. In modern Jewish families in Bombay and Calcutta Arabic is the language of the old people. The young people everywhere speak English.

2. Certain of their marital customs show definite influence of the matriarchal customs of their Hindu neighbours. Alliances used to be arranged by the parents, but the modern young people make their own choice. On the wedding day the bride is given a small gold marriage token called *tali*, similar to that worn by local Hindu women but of distinctive design. The *tali* is on a thread which the girl's mother ties round her neck just before they go to the Synagogue. The bride walks to the Synagogue veiled accompanied by her mother and sisters. She is taken to a special seat at the west end of the Synagogue and a cylindrical white net is lowered so as to envelop her. She remains inside this covering until the end of the ceremony, but the groom is not placed under a canopy. He wears a hat, or traditional silk cap and has a prayer shawl (*zizit*) around his shoulders. During the ceremony the groom gives the bride a silver ring. Tradi-

---

<sup>1</sup> Ayyar's interesting account of the customs of the Cochin Jews needs revision.

tionally this should be made from a silver Hyderabad rupee of pre-British days, but these are now unobtainable. After the wedding the silver ring is replaced by a modern occidental type gold ring. Both the ring and the *tali* are taken from the widows at the husband's death as among Hindus. A wife goes to her mother's home for the birth of a child.

3. Until the present generation Jewesses always wore necklaces made of tiger's claws set in gold. These were supposed to ward off evil. Similar ornaments were worn by the Nair women as shown by the illustration given by Ayyar (1912).

4. A peculiar detail connected with the Synagogue in Cochin is the presence of two pulpits (Salem). One in the usual place the middle of the auditorium, and another up in the balcony on the east side in front of the grilled ladies gallery. The latter pulpit is characteristic of all the Synagogues in Cochin, the Law is read from it on the Sabbath and on special festivals. The high pulpit is supported from the ground by two large brass pillars which symbolize the great pillars of Solomon's temple, called Yakim and Boaz. On the eighth day of the feast of the Tabernacles the five scrolls of the Pentateuch of Moses are taken out of the Synagogue sprinkled with rose water and carried around the grounds by the young men in procession surrounded by crowds of youths jumping and chanting. This ceremony which is not performed elsewhere resembles the Hindu custom of taking their idols in procession. As de Paiva noted the Jews remove their shoes before entering the Synagogue, a universal custom among Indian communities. There are some Psalm tunes called 'Shingli' which are used by the White Jews and are supposed to have come from Cranganore.

5. The White Jews have no Rabbi, one of the elders leads the services and various members read the Law. Disputes are settled by the elders. Of late years the Black Jews have elected a special man to read the services who is paid a salary, but he is not a trained Rabbi. Each community has a Kosher butcher and an official circumciser. Since all the small boys attend a circumcision they have a real dread of the latter officer. Modern surgical methods are now employed by the White Jews, but in the past, infections, some of which were fatal, were not unknown.

6. Their ordinary diet consists of curries made chiefly of fish or chicken, highly spiced with chillies and eaten with rice. The food is still eaten with the fingers in the Indian manner except by a few of the best educated people.

7. Children are named after their grandparents. The first boy for the paternal grandfather and the next for the maternal grandfather. The first daughter for the paternal grandmother and the second for the maternal grandmother. It is considered unlucky for a boy to bear his father's given name while the father is alive. Sons sometimes take their father's name after his death.

Orthodox Jews are extremely conservative in every smallest detail of their ritual. If a group of men and women came from the West slightly before the advent of the Portuguese and started a separate community of White Jews, as the Black Jews aver, it is inconceivable that they would have adopted so many customs of the Malabar Jews, some of which are distinctly Indian. If this community held itself aloof from the members of the ancient Jewish colony they would cling all the more tenaciously to their own customs. The peculiar customs which are still common to both communities of Cochin Jews indicate that there has always been a group of Jews in Malabar which kept their racial strain free from Indian genes, and another section which did not. Any Jews who came from the west to settle permanently would associate with the former, and because they arrived a few at a time they would gradually be absorbed into the domiciled group and adopt their customs.

The reason why the Synagogue of the White Jews is called Parathesi, needs further investigation. '*Paradesi*' is a Sanskrit word used to designate foreigners in Kerala (*para* = alien, *desi* = country). The Black Jews say that this name proves that the Whites were newcomers in the 16th century. It does not seem probable that any community would name their own Synagogue as 'Foreign'. I do not know when this name was first used but suggest that it was originally called the '*Paradisus*' or Garden Synagogue because it was built on a part of the grounds of the Raja's palace. This was a common designation for park or garden in Europe in the 17th century and may have been employed by the Dutch to designate this Synagogue. Later the meaning was forgotten and the name was corrupted into '*paradesi*', a word in common use locally.

#### THE SEROLOGICAL ATTACK ON THE RACE PROBLEM.

An anthropological study of the Cochin Jews who are interesting both as an isolated Semitic group, and also as a dying community (T. Menon) was desired. I am indebted to some prominent members of the community for much information, as well as for persuading their relatives to be measured and to give blood samples for grouping. These people have for the most part lived quiet lives in this out of the way corner of the world and they are very conservative and shy. With the help of Mr. S. S. Koder and of Mr. E. I. Hallegua I was able to take physical measurements of 22 of the White Jews, and to get blood from 50, which is half the community. After that we met with reluctance or opposition and the work had to be discontinued. My friends declared that it would not be possible to get adult Black Jews to submit to measuring, and they were very doubtful whether any of them would allow their blood to be grouped. Rumours and exaggeration are always rife in backward regions

and the Black Jews thought that I was going to discover from each man's blood whether he was a Jew or a convert. Finally with the help of Mr. A. B. Salem and Mr. Koder I was able to get blood from over a hundred of the Black Jews in Cochin and Ernakulam, chiefly from the children in the Hebrew School that is held in an upper room connected with each of their Synagogues.

I shall deal first with the seriological data. It is well-known that the incidence of the agglutinin B is higher in India than anywhere else (Snyder, Wiener). The proportions of the blood groups in Jewish communities vary in different countries (see Table II) but the percentage of B is never high. Gypsies after centuries of residence in Hungary still show a north Indian type of blood group distribution. Jews in India who have remained endogamous should show a Near Eastern or European type of blood group distribution.

Agglutinin tests were done by the open slide method (Wiener) with test sera of Groups A and B supplied by the King Institute of Medicine, Madras. These sera had been originally standardized with test sera from the Pasteur Institute, Paris, as well as with the sera supplied to me by the Haffkine Institute, Bombay, for agglutinin tests in Cochin in 1935 and 1936 (Macfarlane 1936). Blood grouping of the Jews was done late in April, 1936. My own blood, Group AB, was used each day as a check on the potency of the test sera. Two drops of each blood sample were mixed with 1 c.c. of normal saline and the tests were made immediately.

Because it was the hot season most of the White Jews were staying at Alwaye, where they have some fine houses on the banks of the Periyar River. I was able to visit them there and to get several blood samples which I tested on the spot. The data are shown in Table I.

The distribution of the blood groups in the three Jewish communities are completely dissimilar. The data for the Brown Jews can be disregarded because there are so few of them. These people are known and acknowledged to be racially mixed. The White Jews show a preponderance of persons in Group A. The reason for this is the very high degree of in-breeding. Almost any two White Jews possess at least one great-grandparent in common. The two major families, which frequently intermarry, are almost homozygous for the dominant gene A. A record of a Jewish family in America whose members all belonged to Group A is referred to by Parr (in Kappers). Table II shows that Group A is high in Jewish communities in the Near East. Great caution must be exercised in attempting to draw inferences of racial relationships from the data of small inbred groups. Aiyappan (1936) found the following percentages of blood groups among the Pre-Dravidian Paniyan Hillmen of South Malabar: O 20%, A 60.4%, B 7.6%, AB 10, which are also probably due to inbreeding. The White Jews and the Paniyans have nothing

else in common anthropographically but a high frequency of agglutinin A. It may be noted that the frequency of gene B in the White Jews is of the same order as that in the Jews of the Near East (Table II). Among 166 Cochin Jews none was found in Group AB, probably another effect of inbreeding.

The Black or Malabar Jews show an even more unusually high percentage of Group O, which lacks both agglutinogens. Similar high percentages have only been recorded in isolated ancient races such as the Australians and Amerinds (Red Indians) who are in no way related to these Jews. It has already been shown (Macfarlane 1936) that there is a high percentage of Group O among the low caste and out-caste people of Ernakulam. The Black Jews have lived among these people for hundreds of years and there is every reason to believe that they have followed the old Hebrew customs of taking wives and concubines from the native inhabitants. These women most likely came from the servant, fisherman and labourer classes. The high class Hindu Sudras in this region, the Nairs, have always been matriarchal. It is very unlikely that Nair women would associate with the Jews. Likewise it is improbable that members of the ancient St. Thomas or Syrian Christians, would take service with the Jews. This leaves only such castes as the various artisans, Illuvass,<sup>1</sup> Valans, and the pre-Dravidian Pulayas, many of whom were slaves. In Table I blood group data from 260 persons belonging to all the low castes have been lumped together. These data were collected by Dr. P. Narayan Menon and myself at the General Hospital, Ernakulam, in 1935-36; they include those for 182 Illuvass and Pre-Dravidian Tribes which were published previously by castes (Macfarlane 1936). Since persons who type as Groups A and B may be heterozygous for the recessive gene R (of Group O) the frequency,  $r$ , of this gene is much higher than the percentage of Group O phenotypes. The chances that any low caste woman in Ernakulam will possess gene R are 7 for to 3 against.

The genes A, B, and R which give the blood groups are multiple allelomorphs. In a closed population when selection is absent 'under any system of mating the ratio of dominant to recessive allelomorphs remains constant' (Haldane). Among the White Jews the two largest and financially most favoured families belong to Group A. Members of other families tend to move away for better opportunities, thus causing an unconscious selection of Group A people. The children of non-Semitic concubines have been strictly segregated socially and there are no physical indications of admixture with Indian people. The Black Jews have probably descended from Semitic immigrants who from time to time took native converts as wives. This

---

<sup>1</sup> Also spelled Izhuva (Ayyar, Macfarlane), the simpler spelling is used here after Guha, Census of India, 1931, Volume I.



community therefore continually received more additions of the preponderant local gene R, and the percentage of Group O (genotype RR) increased.

Table II gives some data on blood groups of Jewish communities together with that for other people in the same country. It is interesting to note that German Jews show a lower percentage of Group B than Germans in Berlin where there is an underlying Slavic racial element. Poles were found to have a higher percentage of Group B than Polish Jews. The further East the residence of the Jewish community the higher the percentage of Group B, which is true of human groups as a whole.

Anthropologically and historically the Jews must be recognized, like the Aryans, as a cultural group of mixed racial strains, they are not a race in the biological sense. Kappers (1934) doubts that all the Jews in the world originated from Palestinian ancestors, and the Great Rabbi's instructions to the Black Jews of Cochin prove that this is not considered necessary.

Few people realize that it is not difficult for a Gentile woman to become a Jewess. It is more convenient for orthodox Jewesses if their personal servants be of the Jewish faith. There is an Indian girl in Cochin of Hindu parentage who was brought up from childhood as a Jewess and trained in all the Laws and ritual by Mr. Koder's grandmother. When she reached maturity there was nobody among the Jewish communities who would marry her; she therefore became a Roman Catholic convert and married an Indian Christian.

#### PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF WHITE JEWS.

In 1935 measurements were made of thirteen female and nine male White Jews. It was not possible to obtain more and these meagre data are given because all the subjects are relatives, and as a family record some interesting points may be noted. They are evidently highly heterozygous and there is considerable variation among sibs in spite of generations of inbreeding, which is to be expected from the foregoing descriptions of the origins of the community. The cephalic indices show that some are strongly brachycephalic, while there is also a mesocephalic minority. Kappers found that the Jews of the Near East similarly showed two distinct groups. The Aschkenasim and Mosul Jews were brachycephalic from Subarean ancestors, and had large convex noses. The Sephardim and Turkish Jews were mesocephalic from an Asiatic-Mediterranean mixture.

The average cephalic index for these White Jews is 81.5. Ayyar found the average for the Black Jews to be 77.1, but does not mention how many were measured. The Jews are of a good height. They lead a sedentary life and many of them are plump and soft. They have a poor carriage and tend to walk with the pelvis swung forward and the feet splayed. They are rather

phlegmatic and do not gesticulate like the Jews in Europe. Some of them are blonde and a few red headed, others have black hair. The hair is seldom straight, though often fine, and several people have definitely kinky hair which may indicate distant North African affinities (Plates 5 and 6, figs. 24-34). There are no real blue eyes at present among them but several types of light hazel colour as well as grey. The ears tend to be large and several people have marked Darwin's points on their pinnæ. In spite of a soft diet most of the adults have good teeth, but some of the children suffer from a very severe type of dental caries which blackens the first teeth. Their skins vary from very fair to olive brown. It is generally believed that these White Jews are of an unhealthy waxen white, probably because of the exaggerated descriptions of Pierre Loti (Day, Loti). All white children in India lack rosy cheeks, if they live on the plains, and generally have a tired appearance, and this is true of the young Jews; they are not allowed out in the hot sun and some have a pallid complexion.

Exact data on morbid or pathological conditions have not yet been obtained. A majority of them suffer from infected tonsils and adenoids, and about fifty per cent. have bad eyes. There are some cases of diabetes. Hereditary mental derangement is present in two of the important families and is often manifested as manic depression in middle aged women. There is one feeble-minded young man and several moronic types. Fertility is rather low and some women have involuntary abortions.

On the other hand there are several very able members of the community, including a successful physician and other University graduates. Although most of them are land-owners they are not well off now because of the decline in prices of agricultural products. One of the White Jews was the first to introduce Japanese rickshaws into Cochin. One of the most go ahead families has a thriving retail business, and its members own and operate ferries and other types of transport on the harbour and backwaters. None of them has taken up banking or money lending.

Given a balanced diet, proper exercise and modern educational facilities, members of this community will undoubtedly rise to prominence.

#### CONCLUSIONS.

Evidence from blood groups, physical and cultural anthropology shows that if the claims which each Jewish community makes for itself be combined with the statements that the other Jewish community makes about them, the resulting account of their race and origins is probably near the truth.

The White Jews have preserved a Near Eastern and European Semitic strain and show no indications of admixture

with Malayalis. They are descended in the male line from Jewish immigrants from Arabia, North Africa and Europe who have arrived during the past 450 years. The fact that they have a few customs peculiar to themselves and to the Black Jews, some of which show local Hindu influence, demonstrates a cultural continuity with an ancient Indian Jewish community. They have probably descended from inhabitants of the old Jewish principality at Shingli (Cranganore) of a millenium ago, through female lines. All the descendants of these early Jewish settlers in the male lines have died out or moved away.

The Black Jews are the descendants of mixed Semitic and native Malayali ancestors. In the past converted and manumitted Indian slaves have been absorbed into this community. Their origin was no doubt in true Semites who came to Cranganore long ago. According to Rabbinical ruling they are true Jews if they follow all the Judaic ritual. Judaism is a culture and Jews come from many races.

It is quite possible that there exist in Kerala people of similar racial admixtures among Anglo-Indians, Black Jews, Hindus (matriarchal low castes), and Muslims.

TABLE I.

*Blood Groups of Jews and of Low Castes in Cochin.*

Caste.	Nos.	Percentages in Groups.				Frequencies.		
		O	A	B	AB	p	q	r
White Jews ..	50	18	62	20	0	42.7	14.8	42.5
Brown Jews	10	40	10	50	0	..	..	..
Black Jews ..	106	73.6	10.4	16	0	5.7	8.7	85.6
Misc. Low Castes ..	260	48.1	29.3	16.1	6.5	19.9	11.3	69.6

TABLE II.  
*Distribution of Blood Groups in Jewish and neighboring Communities.*

Nationality.	Investigator.	Nos.	Percentages in Groups.				Frequencies.		
			O	A	B	AB	p	q	r
1. German Jews ..	Schiff and Ziegler	..	42.1	41.1	11.9	4.9	26.4	8.8	64.8
2. Germans (Berlin) ..	Schiff	5621	36.1	42.6	14.9	6.4	28.6	11.3	60.1
3. Dutch Jews ..	v. Herwerden	705	42.6	39.4	13.4	4.5	25.2	9.4	65.3
4. Dutch ..	"	6679	46.8	41.7	8.6	3.0	25.3	6	68.5
5. Polish Jews ..	Halber and Mydlarski	818	33.1	41.5	17.4	8	28.9	13.6	58
6. Poles ..	"	11488	32.5	37.6	20.9	9	28.2	11.1	62.6
7. Rumanian Jews ..	"	1135	38.2	39	17.5	6.3	25.3	12.2	61.8
8. Romanians ..	Jonescu	2740	41.4	39.4	13.8	5.2	25.7	10.2	64.3
9. Macedonian Jews ..	"	500	38.8	33	23.2	5	21.3	15.3	62.3
10. Macedonian Turks ..	Hirsfeld	500	36.8	38	18.6	6.6	25.6	13.6	60.7
11. Syrian Jews ..	"	181	28.72	34.25	19.33	17.76	28.2	18.2	53.5
12. Syrian Moslems ..	Parr	1777	35	36.57	19.13	9.28	26	14.9	59.1
13. Aleppo Jews ..	"	172	38	34	20	8	23.5	14.8	61.6
	Alkouran								

1 from Landsteiner, K. 'The Human Blood Groups', 1928.

2-10 from Wiener, A. S. 'Blood Groups and Blood Transfusion', 1935.

11-13 from Parr, L. W., in Kappers, C. U. A., 'An Introduction to the Anthropology of the Near East', 1934.

TABLE III.  
Measurements of Cochin White Jews—9 males.

Subject No.	127	129	131	134	139	133	143	146	130
Age	28	26	23	48	17	7	36	25	42
Stature	170.7	174.5	176.0	166.4	179	125.4	175.7	172.5	166.2
Sitting height	83.2	96	86.7	84.8	83.3	58.2	88.2	82.7	80.3
Weight in kgms.	74.46	81.72	65.38	51.76	54.93	19.96	74.46	82.17	72.64
Thigh length	45	49	49.5	45.5	51.5	35.0	48.5	49.5	47
Tibia length	42	43	42.5	40	48	30.5	38.5	43.5	41.5
Max. head length	18.8	19.5	18.5	18.8	17.2	16.7	19.4	19	18.9
Max. head breadth	14.4	15.4	15.3	15.2	15	14	14.9	15.5	15
Min. frontal breadth	10.9	11.7	11.2	10.5	10.4	10.6	10	10.9	11.1
Max. bizygomatic breadth	12.5	13	12	11.4	10.5	9.8	9.9	10.8	12
Bigonial breadth	10.3	11.4	10.9	9.8	9.5	8.5	9.8	10.3	10.2
Nasal length	5	5.2	6	5.7	5.4	..	5.5	5.6	6
Nasal breadth	3.4	3.8	3.4	3.3	3	..	3.5	3.5	3.2
Upper facial length	6.5	7.2	7.4	7.5	6.7	6	7	7.4	7.3
Total facial length	12.5	12	12.9	12.2	11.9	9.8	11.4	11.8	12.3
Length Breadth Index of head	76.5	78.9	82.5	81	87.2	84	77	81.5	79.3
Nasal Index	68	73	56.6	58	55.5	..	63.6	62.5	53.3
Hair colour	N	L.B.	N	D.B.	Blonde.	Blonde.	L.B.	N	N
Hair type	wavy	kinky	kinky	wavy	curly	stret.	curly	kinky	curly
Eye colour	D.B.	L.B.	Green	D.B.	D.B.	L.B.	L.B.	D.B.	N
Ear length	6.6	7.1*	7.2*	6.7	6	..	6.8	6*	6.8*

\* Decurrent lobes.

Legend: N = Black. L.B. = Light Brown. D.B. = Dark Brown. All measurements in cms.

#### Relationships.

Subject Nos. 127, 129 and 131, also 147 are sibs. No. 134 is a 2nd cousin and is father of Nos. 139 and (females) 128 and 132. No. 133 is cousin to the last three and nephew of all the others here mentioned. No. 143 is 2nd cousin of No. 134. No. 146 is cousin to 127 and sibs. 130 is a 3rd cousin of 134.

Note.—Leg measurements were taken over one layer of clothes and are therefore only approximate, to show bodily proportions. No. 139 is tall because of long leg bones.

TABLE IV.  
*Measurements of Cochin White Jews—13 females.*

Subject No.	142	147+	148+	128	138	132	135	145	137	136	144	140	141
Age	36	25	36	23	18	10	18	17	13	19	14	20	50
Stature	149	152.3	160	157.3	150.5	142.5	150	150.4	147.4	145.7	146	163	162
Sitting height	70.4	77.4	76.4	79.3	77.3	65.2	71.5	70.7	71	73.3	72.2	79.2	82.5
Weight in kgs.	50.39	..	..	59	37.23	31.78	52.21	33.6	49.94	43.58	29.51	51.3	52.66
Thigh length	42.3	41.5	46.5	44	39.5	41.8	45	40	40.3	40.5	39	45.5	43
Tibia length	39	36	39	34.5	35.8	37	36	37.5	37.2	33.5	36	40.5	39.5
Max. head length	18.1	17.6	18.3	16.9	16.5	17.7	17.4	16.9	17.1	16.9	16.5	17.7	18.2
Max. head breadth	14.2	14.4	14	14.6	14.3	14.4	14.5	13.5	14.4	13	13.8	14.8	14.5
Min. frontal breadth	9.7	11.2	10.5	10.9	10	10.9	9.9	9.4	10.2	10.5	9.8	10.7	10.2
Max. bizygomatic breadth	9.9	12.6	11.6	11.5	10.4	11.1	10.6	9.8	11	10.9	10.2	11.6	11.3
Bigonial breadth	8.8	9.2	9.4	8.7	8.8	9.4	9.1	8.5	8.9	9.6	8.7	8.8	10.1
Nasal length	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.3	5.5	4.6	4.8	5.5	5.3	5.2	5.4	5.3	6.0
Nasal breadth	3.5	3.1	3.3	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.7	3.2
Upper facial length	6.7	6.2	6.8	7.0	6.8	6.4	6.2	6.8	7.0	6.7	7.0	7.0	8.2
Total facial length	10.3	11.0	11.7	11.1	11.0	10.5	11.3	11.1	12.2	10.8	10.7	11.6	12.1
Length breadth	78.2	81.8	76.5	86.3	86.6	81.5	83.3	80	84	77	83.5	83.5	79.8
Index of head	65	56.4	60	56.6	56.4	65	66.8	61.8	58.5	59.5	72.2	69.9	53.4
Nasal Index	..	L.B.	D.B.	L.B.	L.B.	B.	L.B.	D.B.	L.B.	N.	N.	N.	D.B.
Hair colour	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Hair type	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Eye colour	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Ear length	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

\* = decurrent lobes.

+ = measured in 1936, all others in 1935.

Legend as Table III.

*Relationships.*

Subject No. 142 is sister to male No. 134 and to No. 148. 128 and 138, also 132 and 133 are nieces and nephew of 142 and 148.

No. 147 is sister of 127, 129 and 131 (table III).

Nos. 135 and 145 are sisters and third cousins to 134, etc., also to 127, etc.



LITERATURE CITED.<sup>1</sup>

1. Anon., 1893. Cochin. Jewish Encyclopædia—London.
2. Anon., 1925. Un contribution à l'histoire des Juifs de Cochin. Paris.
3. Aiyappan, A., 1936. Blood groups of the Pre-Dravidians of the Wynard Plateau. *Current Science*, 4 : 493-494.
4. Ayyar, L. K. Ananthakrishna, 1912. The Cochin Tribes and Castes. 2 : 400-434. Madras.
5. Baur, E., Fischer, E. and Lenz, F., 1931. Human Heredity. Translated by C. and E. Paul. London.
6. Buchanan, C., 1807. Christian Researches in Asia. London.
7. Burnell, A. C., 1874. The original settlement deed of the Jewish Colony at Cochin. *Ind. Antiquary* 3 : 333-334 (with facsimile of copper-plate).
8. Castro, Rabbi Jacob, 1777. Aholé Jacob. (in Hebrew). Leghorn.
9. Correa, Gaspar, 1858-1866. Lendas da India. Lisbon.
10. Daniel, K. N., 1924. Dissertations on the copper-plates in the possession of the St. Thomas Christians. *The Indian Antiquary* 53 : 185-196, 219-229, 244-251, 257-261.
11. Danvers, F. C., 1894. The Portuguese in India. London.
12. Day, F., 1863. The Land of the Permauls, or Cochin its past and present. Madras.
13. Fishburg, M., 1911. The Jews, a study of race and environment. London.
14. Galletti, A. and Groot, P., 1911. Memorandum on the administration of the Coast of Malabar by the Rt. Worshipful Adriaan Moens. Dutch Records No. 13. The Dutch in Malabar (translation), pp. 192-198, 222. Madras.
15. Haldane, J. B. S., 1930. Theoretical genetics of autopolyploids. *Journ. Gen.* 22 : 359-372.
16. (Hallegua, I) Anon., 1906. Malabar Jews, I and II. *The Jewish Chronicle*, Oct. 5 and 19.
17. Kappers, C. U. Ariëns, 1934. An introduction to the Anthropology of the Near East, with a chapter on Near Eastern blood groups by L. W. Parr. Amsterdam.
18. Lawson, C. A., 1860. British and Native Cochin. Cochin.
19. Logan, W., 1887. Malabar. Madras.
20. Lord, J. H., 1892. The White and Black Jews of Malabar. *Indian Church Review*.
21. Loti, P., 1925. L'Inde. Paris.
22. Macfarlane, E. J. W., 1936. Preliminary note on the blood groups of some Cochin Castes. *Current Science*, 4 : 653-654.
23. Menon, C. Achyuta, 1911. The Cochin State Manual. Ernakulam.
24. Menon, T. K. Sankara, 1933. Cochin. *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. 31. Ernakulam.
25. De Paiva, Moise Pereyra, 1687. Notisias das Judeons de Cochin. Republished 1923, with an introduction by M. B. Amzalak (in Portuguese). Lisbon.
26. Roby, N. E., 1909. Cochin Jews. Ozar Israel (Jewish Encyclopædia in Hebrew). New York.
27. Salem, A. B., 1929. Eternal Light or Cochin Jewtown Synagogue. Ernakulam.
28. Snyder, L. H., 1930. Human blood groups. Their inheritance and racial significance. *Am. Journ. Phys. Anthropol.*, 9 : 233-263.
29. Thurston, E. and Rangachari, K., 1909. Castes and Tribes of South India 2 : 460-492. Madras.
30. Venkayya, V., 1896-7. *Epigraphia Indica* 4 : 290-297.

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Shabdai S. Koder for many of the historical references.

31. Visscher, J. C., 1743. Letters from Malabar, 13 and 18. Amsterdam. Translated 1862. Madras.
32. Wiener, A. S., 1935. Blood groups and Blood Transfusions. New York.

EXPLANATIONS TO PLATES 1 TO 6.

*Plate 1.*

- Fig. 1. Doorway of Parathesi Synagogue of White Jews. Bridge leads to old Hebrew School.
- Fig. 2. Levite in doorway of Parathesi Synagogue with large ceremonial horn (Shofár). Note almsbox in wall behind.
- Fig. 3. Brother and sister, aged 7 and 10. Nephew and niece of people in plates 5 and 6. Measured as Nos. 132 and 133.
- Fig. 4. Blonde White Jew girl and boy of mixed Brown Jews.
- Fig. 5. Young boys of the White Jews.

*Plate 2.*

- Fig. 6. Ancient copper-plate grants of the White Jews. Actual size of each plate 11×5 inches.
- Fig. 7. Reverse of third plate in fig. 6.

*Plate 3.—Physical Types among the White Jews of Cochín.*

- Fig. 8. Spinster aged 50. Measured as No. 141.
- Fig. 9. Aged 18, unmarried, sister of elder girl in fig. 11.
- Fig. 10. Bachelor, aged 18. Not measured.
- Fig. 11. Girls aged 14 and 17. Measured as Nos. 144 and 145. Elder is sister of fig. 9.
- Fig. 12. Aged 36. Married. Measured as No. 143.
- Fig. 13. Bachelor, aged 59. Swarthy complexion. Only 6-type nose in community.
- Fig. 14. Same as fig. 13 in traditional Sabbath dress. Cap and waistcoat of coloured silk.

*Plate 4.—Physical Types among Cochín Black Jews.*

- Figs. 15 and 16. Modern educated man.
- Fig. 17. A prominent member of the community. Semitic type.
- Fig. 18. Old schoolmaster of Synagogue Hebrew school.
- Fig. 19. Group of children. Fig. 20. Girls in every-day dress.

*Plate 5.—Members of one Family of White Jews. Second cousins to people in Plate 6.*

- Fig. 21. Spinster, aged 36. Sister of fig. 22, aunt of the rest. Measured as No. 142.
- Figs. 22-23. Scholar and University graduate, aged 48. Brother of fig. 21, father of other three. Measured as No. 134.
- Figs. 24-25. Wife of fig. 39, aged 23. Measured as No. 128. Hair frizzy.
- Figs. 26-27. Student, aged 17. Measured as No. 139.
- Fig. 28. Student, aged 18. Measured as No. 138.

*Plate 6.—Three White Jews, Sibs (Brothers and Sister).*

- Figs. 39-40. Husband of fig. 24, aged 26. Measured as No. 129.
- Figs. 31-32. Bachelor, aged 23. Measured as No. 131.
- Figs. 33-34. College student, aged 25. Unmarried. Measured as No. 147. Hair frizzy.

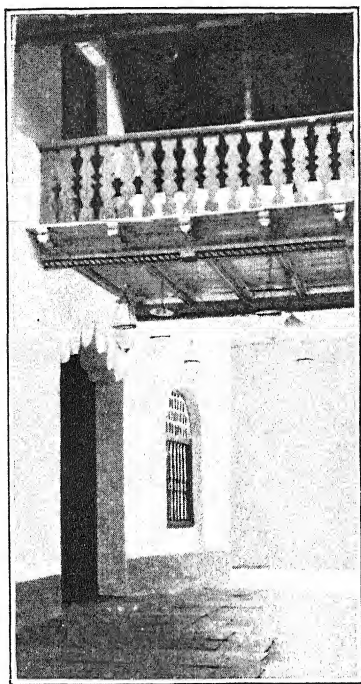


FIG 1.



FIG. 2.

FIG. 1.—Doorway of Parathesi Synagogue of White Jews.

FIG. 2.—Levite of Parathesi Synagogue with large ceremonial horn.



FIG. 3. Brother and Sister.



FIG. 4. Blonde White Jew girl and boy of mixed Brown Jews.



FIG. 5. Young boys of the White Jews.





FIG. 6. Ancient copperplate grants of the White Jews.  
Actual size of each plate is 11 × 5 inches.

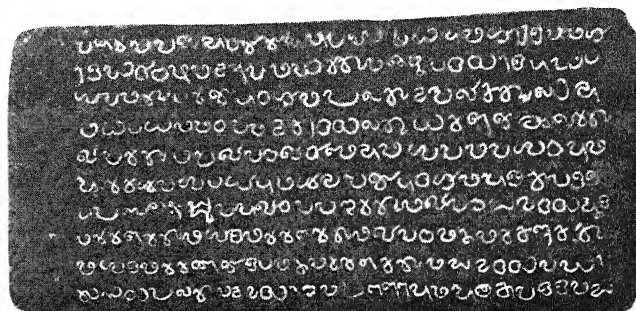


FIG. 7.  
Reverse of the 3rd plate.\*







FIG. 8.  
Spinster, aged 50.



FIG. 9.  
Unmarried, aged 18.



FIG. 10.  
Bachelor, aged 18.



FIG. 11.  
Girls, aged 14  
and 17.

FIG. 12.  
Married, aged 36.



FIG. 12.

FIG. 11.

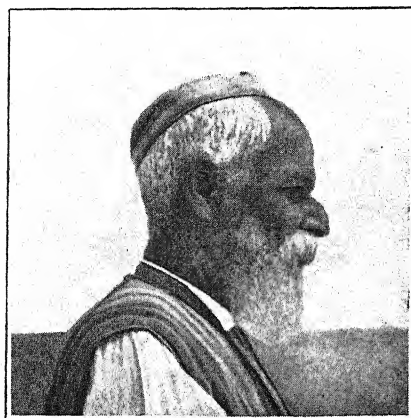


FIG. 13.

FIG. 13. Bachelor, aged 59.

FIG. 14. Same as Fig. 13.



FIG. 14.





FIG. 15. [Figs. 15 and 16. Modern educated man.]

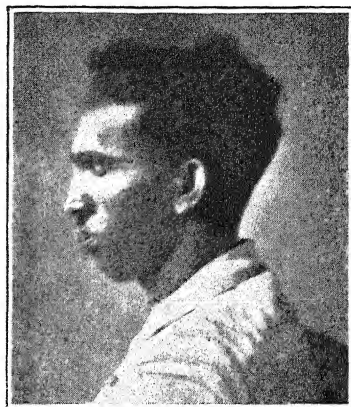


FIG. 16.



FIG. 17.

FIG. 17. A prominent member of the community. Semitic type.



FIG. 18.

FIG. 18. Old schoolmaster of Synagogue Hebrew School.



FIG. 19.

FIG. 19. Group of children.



FIG. 20.

FIG. 20. Girls in everyday dress.





FIG. 21. Spinster, aged 36.  
[Sister of Fig. 22.]

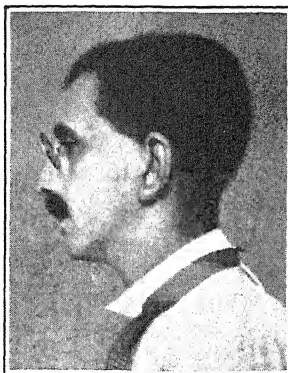


FIG. 22.  
[Figs. 22-23. University graduate, aged 48.]

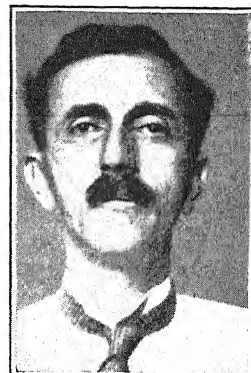


FIG. 23.



FIG. 24. [Figs. 24-25. Wife of Fig. 29, aged 23. Hair frizzy.]



FIG. 25.

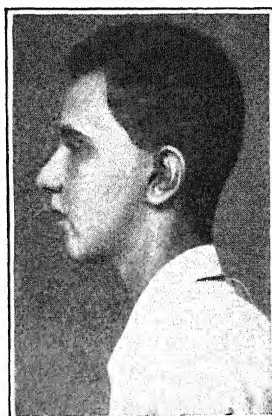
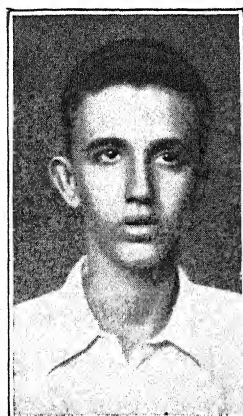


FIG. 26. [Figs. 26 and 27. Student, aged 17.]



FIG. 28. [Student, aged 18.]

MEMBERS OF ONE FAMILY OF WHITE JEWS. SECOND COUSINS TO PEOPLE IN PLATE 6.







FIG. 29.

[Figs. 29-30. Husband of Fig. 24, aged 26.]



FIG. 30.



FIG. 31.

[Figs. 31-32. Bachelor, aged 23.]



FIG. 32.



FIG. 33.

[Figs. 33-34. College student, unmarried, aged 25.]



FIG. 34.

THREE WHITE JEWS, SIBS (BROTHERS AND SISTER).



## The Social Institutions of the Mālpāhāriās.

By SASANKA SEKHER SARKAR.

(Communicated by Dr. B. S. Guha.)

The Mālpāhāriās are an aboriginal tribe occupying the southern portion of the Rajmahal Hills in the district of Santal Perganas. They are very closely related to the Mālers, who occupy the northern part of the same district. In the census of 1931 the Mālpāhāriās are mentioned as speaking 'a western dialect of Bengali'<sup>1</sup> and the view has been expressed that the Mālers and the Mālpāhāriās belong to two different ethnic stocks.<sup>2</sup> It is true, of course, that a large number of the Mālpāhāriās have already entered the Hindu fold and some speak the dialect of Māto which is not akin to their present tongue, but this is not universal with all the Mālpāhāriās.<sup>3</sup>

### SOCIAL GROUPS.

The Mālpāhāriās are divided into the following social groups which Risley called septs,<sup>4</sup> namely: (1) Singh, (2) Kumār, (3) Āhri, (4) Derhi, (5) Grihi, (6) Mānjihi, (7) Pujhor, (8) Rāi, (9) Pātor, (10) Ghuns, (11) Daloi. These social groups cannot be called clans, as they are neither strictly exogamous nor unilateral kinship groups. They have no function in controlling marriages, which like the Mālers are reckoned by the prohibited degrees.<sup>5</sup> Some of the above social groups appear to have their origins in different occupations. The social groups mentioned above, are not, however, met with among all the Mālpāhāriās but are true of the Mālpāhāriās of Dumka Sub-division wherefrom my data were mostly collected. I have also collected some social data from the Mālpāhāriās, who have settled down in the tea gardens of Darjeeling from a long time but they do not possess any of the above group names.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Census of India, 1931—Bihar and Orissa, Vol. VII, Pt. I, p. 233.*

<sup>2</sup> Ghosh, R. R.—Note on the Sauria or Māler Pāhāriās—*Census of India, Vol. I, Pt. III, B, p. 112.*

<sup>3</sup> Sarkar, S.—The Census and the Mālpāhāriās, *Current Science*, January, 1934.

<sup>4</sup> Risley—*Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1892, Vol. II, p. 99.

<sup>5</sup> According to the prohibited degrees 'marriage with any person descended in a direct line from the same parents is universally forbidden'. Usually the formula for prohibited degrees is extended to the lines of paternal uncle, maternal uncle, paternal aunt, and maternal aunt. (Risley, *loc. cit.*, I, Introduction, xiix.)

## SOCIETY.

Among the Mālpāhārīās, social rules are not very strict. Genealogical records show that the marriage tie is loose. Mothers very often leave the house with their new paramours keeping their children behind. Usually a marriage union can be dissolved before the elders of the village by the woman merely, returning the bride-price and leaving all her children by her former husband with him. Babies feeding on their mother's breast are allowed to go temporarily with their mother but they have to come to their father when they are five years old. The father is to pay some maintenance allowance during the above period. In such cases the bride-price is not returned but kept in lieu of the maintenance allowance of the child.

The looseness of the family tie is due in the main to the excessive habit of alcoholism. Both the sexes indulge in drinking the palmyra palm toddy very largely; the country liquors are also used in spite of the vigilance of the excise people. Among the Santals and the Mālers unlicensed drinking is resorted to only on festive occasions but the habit of daily indulgence among the Mālpāhārīās may not improbably have produced a large number of barren women in every village. The average death-rate is above the normal and the birth-rate seems to be below that of the Mālers, though the women of the latter tribe are given to harder life than the Mālpāhārīā women. In some places, however, among both the Mālpāhārīās and the Mālers living on the plains there is a tendency of higher birth-rates due to more prosperous conditions of living.

## CRIMES.

There is an increasing amount of crime among the Mālpāhārīās at the present time. In some places<sup>1</sup> the Police authorities have been compelled to enforce the Criminal Tribes Act on these people. This Act does not permit any person to leave his own village for any distant place without informing the police. These people are reported to be expert thieves. Burglary, larceny, and house-breaking are the most common offences.

## GOVERNMENT.

The Mālpāhārīās have no government of their own. Where they have settled down in the Hindu villages they are counted as members of the village. In some isolated places where the village is entirely composed of the Mālpāhārīās there is a village headman of their own, but in the Dumka Subdivision it is hardly

<sup>1</sup> The personal observations of the author are from the village Āssānsol, Dumka.

seen, excepting in a few villages only. In every village, whether Hindu or Santal, there is a village headman, who is usually an elderly man of the village. It is not hereditary like the Mālers. The village Āssānsol, already referred to, though wholly a Mālpāhāriā village, has a Hindu headman. The Mālpāhāriās are totally deprived of all judicial powers concerning themselves. The function of the village headman is to keep the whereabouts of the villagers, to collect taxes, and to help the Government in such matters, as the arrest of an individual or his identification, etc.

#### KINSHIP SYSTEM.

The Mālpāhāriās at present use mostly the Bengali terms of kinship. The classificatory system is present to some extent. Father's younger brother and step-father (Kākā) are designated by the same term. The Māler classificatory system is extended to a wider group of relatives than the Mālpāhāriās. Among the Mālers, along with the above two relations, the same term is used to two other relatives, father's younger sister's husband, and mother's younger sister's husband. The single term for step-mother, and mother's younger sister (Mosi) among the Mālpāhāriās includes two more relatives, father's younger sister, and father's younger brother's wife among the Mālers. This change in the Mālpāhāriā kinship system has probably been due to their contact with the Bengalis.

Traces of dual organization,<sup>1</sup> as is evidenced from the kinship terms are met with in the Mālpāhāriā society. The Mālpāhāriās employ the same term for father's elder brother and mother's elder sister's husband (jethā) and their wives (jethi). The Mālers employ the same term for younger brother and mother's younger sister's husband and their wives.

The relationship terms used among the Mālpāhāriās are as follows :—

RELATIONSHIP TABLE.

Relationship Terms.	NAME OF VILLAGES.			
	Gāndo.	Āssānsol.	Fitkāriā.	Āmlāgarhi.
1. Father ..	Bubbā	Bāp	Dādā	Dādā
2. Step-father	Kākā	Sat-Bāp	Kākā	Kākā
3. F.E.B. ..	Jethā	Jethā	Jethe	Jethā
4. F.Y.B. ..	Kākā	Kākā	Kākā	Kākā
5. F.E.B.W.	Jethi	Jethāi	Jethāi	Jethi
6. F.Y.B.W.	Kāki	Kāki	Kāki	Kāki

<sup>1</sup> Ghurye, G. S.—Dual Organization in India, *Jour. Anth. Ins.*, Vol. LIII, p. 79.



## RELATIONSHIP TABLE—(contd.)

Relationship Terms.	NAME OF VILLAGES.			
	Gāndo.	Āssānsol.	Fitkāriā.	Āmlāgarhi.
7. F.E.S. ..	Jethi	Pisi	Jethāi	Jethi
8. F.E.S.H.	Jethā	Pisā	Jethe	Jethā
9. F.Y.S. ..	Pisi	Pisi	Pisi or Nānā	Pisi
10. F.Y.S.H.	Pisā	Pisā	Pisā	Pisā
11. F.F. ..	Ājā	Ājā	Ājā	Ājā
12. F.F.F. ..	Dādā	Dādā	Dādā	Dādā
13. F.M. ..	Āyāh	Āyāh	Āyāh	Āniāh
14. F.F.M. ..	....	Didi	Didi	Dādī
15. Mother ..	Mā	Māi	Māi	Māye
16. Step-mother	Mosi	Mosi	Mosi	Mosi
17. M.E.S. ..	Jethi	Jethi	Jethāi	Jethi
18. M.E.S.H.	Jethā	Jethe	....	Jethā
19. M.Y.S. ..	Mosi	Mosi	Mosi	Mosi
20. M.Y.S.H.	Mosā	Mosā	Mosā	Mosā
21. M.B. ..	Māmmā	Māmmā	Māmā	Māmā
22. M.B.W. ..	Māmmi	Māmmi	Māmi	Māmi
23. M.F. ..	Ājā	Ājā	Ājā	Ājā
24. M.M. ..	Aaiāt	Āji	Didi	Asiāh
25. E.B. ..	Dādā	Dādā	Dādā	Dādā
26. E.B.W. ..	Bhāj	Bhouji	Bhaje	Bhoujai
27. Y.B. ..	By name	Chotā Bhāi	Bhāi	Bhāi
28. Y.B.W. ..	Bo	Boasin	Boasin	Buāsin
29. E.S. ..	Didi	Didi	Didi	Didi
30. E.S.H. ..	Bonui	Bonui	Bohonāi	Bohonāi
31. Y.S. ..	By name	Bāhin	Chotā Bahin	Chotā Bahin
32. Y.S.H. ..	Sālo	Parān	Parān	Parānas
33. Wife ..	By the name of the child.	Bohu	Mahargirthān	Girthān
34. W.E.B. ..	Oisāhāmāri	Parān	Parān	Parānās
35. W.E.B.W.	Didi	Saroin	Saroin	Didi
36. W.Y.B. ..	Bhāi	Sālā	Sāyo	Sāyo
37. W.Y.B.W.	Buāsin	Saroin	Saroin	Bahin
38. W.E.S. ..	Bohinsār	Jethsās	Bahinsās	Bahinsās
39. W.E.S.H.	Baisārhu	Sārhu	Sārhu Bhāi	Bhāi
40. W.Y.S. ..	Sāli	Sāli	Sāuii	Sāuii
41. Y.S.H. ..	Sārobhāi	Sārubhāi	Chotā Sārhu	Sārhu Bhāi
42. W.F. ..	Sāsūr	Sāsūr	Sāsūr	Sāsūr
43. W.M. ..	Sās	Sās	Sās	Sās
44. Husband	By the name of the child.	By the name of the child.	Maharmarad	Marad
45. H.E.B. ..	Jethāso	Jethāso	Bhesur	Bhāsūr
46. H.E.B.W.	Didi	Bhājoi	Didi	Didi
47. H.Y.B. ..	Gutin	Der	Chotā Dewar	Dewār
48. H.Y.B.W.	Gutin	Gutin	Chotā Gutin	Bātin
49. H.E.S. ..	Sās	Jethsās	Barā Bahin	Didi
50. H.E.S.H.	Bhāi	Sārhu	Barā	Dādā
51. H.Y.S. ..	Nanad	Nanad	Bahanāi.	Nanad
52. H.Y.S.H.	Bāi	Nanādasi	Chotā Bahin	Bhāi
53. H.F.	Sasur	Sasur	Bahin Jāmāi	Sasur

RELATIONSHIP TABLE—(concl'd.)

Relationship Terms.	NAME OF VILLAGES.			
	Gāndo.	Āssānsol.	Fitkāriā.	Āmlāgarhi.
54. H.M. ..	Sās	Sās	Sās	Sās
55. Son ..	Nānnu	Betā	Maharbetā	Betā
56. Z.W. ..	Bohu	Putho	Māhār Bohu	Bohu
57. Z.Z. ..	Nāti	Nāti	Nāti	Nāti
58. Z.Z.W. ..	Nātin	Nātin Putho	Nātin	Nātin
59. Z.D. ..	Nātni	Nātni	Nātni	Nātni
60. Z.D.H. ..	Nāti	Nāti	Nāti	Nāti
61. Z.W.F. ..	Samdi	Samdi	Samdi	Samdi
62. Z.W.M. ..	Samdin	Samdin	Samdin	Samdin
63. Daughter	Nānin	Beti	Maharbeti	Beti
64. D.H. ..	Jowai	Mahar Jewai	Mahar Jewai	Jewai
65. D.Z. ..	Nāti	Nāti	Nāti	Nāti
66. D.Z.W. ..	Nātin	Nātin Bohu	Nātin	Nātin
67. D.D. ..	Nātni	Nātni	Nātin	Nātni
68. D.D.H. ..	Nāti	Nātin Jewai	Nāti	Nāti
69. D.H.F. ..	Samdhi	Samdhi	Samdhi	Samdhi
70. D.H.M. ..	Samdhin	Samdhin	Samdhin	Samdhin

F = Father.

Y = Younger.

M = Mother.

W = Wife.

B = Brother.

H = Husband.

S = Sister.

D = Daughter.

E = Elder.

Z = Son.

## BIRTH.

A separate hut is usually erected for the purpose of delivery of a Mālpāhāriā woman. The Dom or Hāri midwives are called in to attend on the pregnant woman. The number of days for which she is confined to the lying-in hut varies in different places. The Mālpāhāriās of Keroduli observe three weeks as the period of confinement and three baths are taken after the end of each week. In Titriā, a Mālpāhāriā village in Pakur Subdivision only seven days are observed in the lying-in hut but the woman is officially declared clean after twenty-one days. In Dumka, only nine days are considered necessary in the lying-in hut but the woman is officially declared clean after six months. During these periods meals cooked by her are tabooed.

## NAME-GIVING.

Among the Mālpāhāriās the child is named on the day when the mother leaves the lying-in hut, i.e. after nine days in Dumka,

seven days in Pakur, and twenty-one days in Keroduli.<sup>1</sup> The Santal custom of naming the baby after the name of the grandfather is met with in Keroduli area only. Names are also given after the name of the father's younger brother, father's elder brother, and mother's younger sister.

The Mālpāhārīās of Dumka Subdivision have adopted a second ceremony known as giving the first rice to the mouth of the baby from the Bengalis, and the mother is declared clean after this ceremony is over and here the mother is to cook this meal for the invited guests. The first rice<sup>2</sup> is given to the baby by its father and when the latter is absent the father's brother offers it.

The Mālpāhārīās are in the habits of suppressing their original names when they come out to the tea gardens or elsewhere for the purposes of employment. This fact was revealed to the author when he was taking anthropometric measurements of this tribe in Darjeeling tea gardens.

#### MARRIAGE.

Among the Mālpāhārīās, marriage is always arranged by the elders of the bride and the bridegroom. The consents of the boy and the girl are very rarely taken. There is, like the Mālers, a professional matchmaker known as Sithudār and his function consists in the negotiations only. Like the Mālers, he does not take part in the actual ceremony at all among these people. The Mālpāhārīās, dwelling on the Pakur-Godda area, still retain the Māler influence because of close contiguity and like the Mālers, practise adult marriage. The Mālpāhārīās appear to have adopted the custom of child marriage after low castes Bengalis. Both the sexes are married between the ages of eight and twelve and this age limit strictly applies to Dumka Subdivision.

The Mālpāhārīās do not marry within kinship groups. Marriage, as stated already, is controlled by the prohibited degrees of relationship. Polygamy is in vogue among the rich. Levirate is recognized. The latter custom is not in vogue among the Bengalis and the Mālpāhārīās are now learning to disapprove of it after the latter.

The bride-price among these people varies from Rs.12 to 20. The actual marriage takes place when the guardians of the bride and the bridegroom have settled the dowry, bride-

<sup>1</sup> The village Keroduli is situated on the Pakur-Godda line, i.e. the present border line of the Māler and the Mālpāhārīā cultures. The area to the north of this line is occupied by the Mālers and the south by the Mālpāhārīās.

<sup>2</sup> Among the Hindus the first rice is given to the mouth of the baby by its mother's brother : the latter being absent father's brother is selected.

price, etc. The ceremony is held during the day. On the appointed day, the bridegroom party starts for the bride's house with the bride-price and necessary presents, the latter consisting of a bangle, usually of zinc, and a turban. These are offered immediately when the bride is presented for the actual ceremony. The bangle is presented to the bride's eldest sister, and the turban to the youngest brother. Then the bride-price is paid and the ceremony begins. The head of the bride is besmeared with oil and vermilion by the bridegroom. The Derhi of the bride's village functions as the priest. He then places the bride's hand on the groom's hand and asks him to be loving and kind to her. During the ceremony the bride and the groom sits facing each other. The Derhi of the bridegroom's village worships Māro<sup>1</sup> before the party sets out for the bride's house. After the ceremony, a huge feast is given. Rice-beer and meat form the most important items. The bride and the bridegroom are then left in a separate room and meals are offered to them in one plate only. This plate is given as a dowry to the bride by her father.

The bride comes along with the bridegroom's party on the same day. Then after eight days the bridegroom brings her to his father-in-law's house. This is known among the Mālpāhāriās as 'Ātmangalā' and this term is also used by both the Mālers and the Mālpāhāriās of the Pakur-Godda area. The bride stops in her father's house only for a day and then she comes with her husband as a permanent inmate of his house.

#### DEATH AND FUNERAL RITES.

The dead is either buried or burnt. In Pakur, like the Mālers, the dead is always buried with the head to the west. In Dumka both the methods of disposing of the dead are practised. In Gāndo, the Mālpāhāriā *Rājā* of the Kumar clan always buries the dead. Here the head is placed towards the north. The choice between cremation and burial depends upon the pecuniary status of the dead man's relatives. The personal belongings are always given away with the departed. The dead man's relatives are prohibited from taking salt, fish and meat for nine days. On the 10th day all the relatives shave and bathe. The chief mourner of the deceased (eldest son in the case of the parents, and oldest relatives in case of others) performs the *śrādh* ceremony. This also has been adopted from the Bengalis and is met with among the Mālpāhāriās of Dumka. Then the chief mourner comes with his relatives to the funeral place and offers rice, rice-beer, a few maize grains, and some rice flour. All the relatives are to offer some food to the departed

<sup>1</sup> No such deity is worshipped among the Mālers during marriage.

and this is done after the chief mourner has finished his offerings. Then follows the usual feast. The offering of a few maize grains along with other food materials is the only surviving trait of maize, forming such an important factor in all the ceremonies in the northern hills among the Mālers and to some extent among the Mālpāhāriās of Pakur and Pakur-Godda area.

The Mālpāhāriās keep a separate piece of land for funeral purposes. This is situated outside the village. At present, most of these Mālpāhāriās prefer to burn the dead. After the body is burnt a piece of bone is thrown into a deep tank where water is present throughout the whole season. The Mālpāhāriās of the Pakur-Godda area always burn the dead with head to the west. The custom of throwing a bit of bone in the water is not in vogue here. The latter custom is not met with among the Mālers and seems to have been adopted from the Hindus.

---

**Notes on rural customs of Dinajpur District.**

By KARUNAKETAN SEN.

These are more or less disjointed notes on some customs I happened to observe in the interior of the Dinajpur District last winter. I did not have the time or opportunity to take up a systematic social study. But even so, it may be worth while to keep record of those customs that I happened to observe. The notes must be preceded by a short account of the area and the population.

*The Area.*—The area is the northern and central part of the Dinajpur District in North Bengal lying near about the Eastern Bengal Railway extension to Ruhea. It is almost an agricultural area. The soil towards the north is not too good and is sandy. There is a lot of jungle and scrub, and the country looks as if it has not been reclaimed from the forest so very long ago. The main crops are paddy, jute, sugar-cane and mustard. Towards the more central part of the district, the soil improves and good paddy is grown. This part looks older. Almost every village has large and old tanks with high embankments round with occasional depressions in them, which serve as an outlet for the overflow during the rains. Ruins of old brick-built houses and old stone images are also found in many villages. The central area looks as if it was once better populated and more prosperous than now.

*The Population.*—The population is divided between Hindus and Muhammedans. The Hindus mostly belong to the caste called Rajbangshis. The controversy whether the Muhammedans are Rajbangshi converts has not been settled. There are some men from North India and a fair sprinkling of Santals and Oraons. Among the Hindus I found an interesting community towards the extreme north of the area. These are landlords and *jotedars*, who have emigrated from Rajputana through Bihar and are still restricting their marriage relations to the emigrant communities here and elsewhere in Bengal and parts of Bihar.

An interesting movement has taken place among the Rajbangshis, led by late Rai Sahib Panchanan Barman, M.B.E., of Rangpur. They are now calling themselves Kshatriyas, adopting the sacred thread and the style of Barman or Singha. The effects of the movement are more apparent near the towns and the more central area of the district. They are asking for special representation in the legislatures and local bodies and a reserved percentage of the smaller government jobs. Socially, it has led to queer results—especially in the position of women.

The women of the caste used to have some freedom of movement, worked in the fields and visited markets and *hats*, the age of marriage used to be comparatively high, and the remarriage of widows was socially approved. All this is changing. Women now want bullock-carts for moving about, the age of marriage is getting lower and though the remarriage of widows is still practised sometimes, it has lost its social sanction. Where it has not objectively altered the customs it has at least changed the social ideal. In the matter of dress also there have been changes. The dress of women formerly used to be, and in the interior still is, a piece of cloth about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet by 3 with very wide borders, tied round the chest below the arms and reaching down to the knee. In the cold weather they wear a thick cotton wrapper round the upper part of the body. The lower garment is woven locally and sometimes consists of two smaller pieces sewn together. The cotton wrappers are made in Bombay. A brick colour with a black border is the most popular variety in wrappers. But near the towns the women are now using the large sari more usual in other parts of Bengal. The movement has given the community greater self-respect and some material advantages but its general effect seems to me to be anti-liberal and against social progress. It would be interesting to make a closer study of the situation for it is typical of movements among the so-called depressed classes, when they begin to imitate what are supposed to be the ways of the higher castes.

*Industries.*—The economic activities of the population are almost entirely agricultural. There are a few other industries like pottery, hand-loom weaving and making rough mats from jute. In a few villages silk-worms are reared on a small scale by women and rough silk (Endi) is produced and woven. The only indication of industrialism is a sugar-mill at Setabganj. But its labour is drawn from the emigrant up-country population. The mill affects local agricultural production only within a radius of about six miles. Beyond that radius the cultivators find transport charges too heavy to make it profitable for them to sell their sugar-cane crop to the mill. The crop is therefore utilized for making molasses or *gur* locally.

After this introduction we can proceed to a description of some of the local village customs. I found religious and quasi-religious customs of the Hindu population the most interesting.

Of all deities the goddess Kali is the most important for this part. In every village there are huts dedicated to her and used as temples. In some of them one finds an image of the goddess Kali—in others only a circular mound of earth, which is painted with vermilion and symbolizes the deity. In some a hollow drum of cork is kept hanging over the mound. This cylinder of pith is painted over in red and black ink with figures of the goddess Kali in the centre and other deities and fairies on either side. There is an omen attached to the cylinder. The believer comes



in the morning and stands in front of the hut. If he happens to face the image of Kali on the pith cylinder, it will be a good day for him. But if the cylinder has turned round and he happens to face any of the other images it will be a bad day. There are one or two Kali temples which have a tradition of human sacrifice in the past. In one village I found a local tradition of a leopard being captured and sacrificed to the goddess not so very long ago.

Besides the huts which are used as temples to Kali there are other places—mostly a plantain grove by the way-side—which are sacred to Kali in another form—*Smasana-Kali* or *Masan-Kali*, in the local dialect, that is Kali of the cremation ground. Many of these have no images on them, and some of them are not quite obviously connected to any cremation ground. No formal worship with priests is held at these places—but people stick effigies of pith at these places. These effigies are sold in the local *hats*, and are connected with magical practices. They represent fairies or demons and sometimes Kali herself. In these effigies the goddess is represented as having wings and riding on horse-back. The protruding tongue and the general aspect show her to be Kali.

Images are also made of other deities who are usually worshipped without an image in most parts of Bengal. I found huts with images of *Manasa*, the snake-goddess, riding on a donkey and with two cobras by her side. This hut was again a sort of permanent temple. In another village—not in Dinajpur but in the immediately adjoining part of the *Purnea District* in *Bihar*—I found a similar temple to *Lakshmi*, the goddess of wealth. Elsewhere in Bengal an image of *Lakshmi* is very rarely found. This image was quite big and was rather like the usual group of figures made for the worship of *Durga*. There were the images of *Lakshmi* and *Saraswati*, the goddess of learning, and those of *Kartikeya* and *Ganesha*, but the central figure of *Durga* was missing.

Many of the villages have a village deity also—with or without a temple. The local term for these deities is just 'grāma' or village. There is usually a place in the village—a grove of trees or a hut—sacred to the village deity. In one village I found an old stone image of *Surya* or the Sun-god worshipped as the village deity. The villagers believed the image to be that of a goddess—'Dulai-Chandi'. This village had another deity 'Sarba-mangalā' who had an image and a big hut and was apparently more important than the village deity. In many of the villages some rent-free land had been endowed by the landlord for the village deity or some other. In most cases the *Mandal* of the village had charge of these lands—but of this later on.

Another deity was important in many villages. This is 'Bisha-hari', another god who protected people from snakes. There was no image, but a hut sacred to him and surrounded by

a line of plantain trees. Though such a hut was found almost in every village and worship of the god was apparently an important annual event, the villagers seemed a little ashamed of this deity and told me that it was the children who worshipped him. I found this attitude rather difficult to understand. But probably the explanation would have come, if I could find out more about the cult.

In most villages one found dried up bamboos from which were hanging broken wicker-work baskets and old shoes. These were sacred to a village goddess who cured stomach-aches of children.

About Muhammedans, I did not find many brick-built mosques. But in many villages there were huts which were places of worship and were called 'Jumma-ghars'. Where there were more than one in a village, the local Muhammedan population was very often divided into factions, each attached to one of the Jumma-ghars. There was a custom of having a picnic out in the open on Idduzzoha day. In almost every village there was one or more tombs of Muhammedan saints and rent-free lands or 'Pir-pāls' attached to each. One or more families enjoy these rent-free lands as Shebaites (the Hindu term is locally used for the Muhammedan shrines also) of the Pir. Their duty consists of looking after the tomb and lighting them on festive occasions. In most cases there is no clear tradition as to the identity of the village Pir nor about the origin of the Pir-pāl tenancies.

The whole question of these rent-free lands, whether attached to a Hindu temple or a Muhammedan shrine, demands more careful investigation. In many cases part of the produce from these lands are utilized for the purpose of worship—but the Shebaites also derive some personal benefit from them. In some cases one would find a Hindu family in charge of a Pir-pāl land or a Muhammedan family in charge of a rent-free tenure endowed to a Hindu deity. In one village I found the population entirely Muhammedan. But the village had been given some rent-free lands endowed in favour of a Hindu deity. This was a fairly big and beautiful stone image of Vishnu-Nārāyana which was to be seen near an old tank in the middle of a jungle. The Muhammedan population apparently held the image in reverence, looked after the place and utilized the produce of the endowed lands in engaging a Brahmin priest once a year for the worship of the deity. There is a tradition that there was another image near the present one. The present image has one of its arms broken. The villagers said that one night twenty or thirty years ago, the two gods had a fight—one of them fell into the tank and disappeared and the other's arm was broken. The present image is placed against a tree and one can easily move it. But the villagers believe that if one came with the intention of taking it away or stealing it, the image would become too heavy

to be moved at all. Similar beliefs are apparently common about many deities—especially about Vishnu images. The Maharajah of Dinajpur has a temple near the outskirts of Thakurgaon town. It is said that a former Maharajah wanted to take the image to Dinajpur and place it in a temple there, and he made a canal from Dinajpur to Thakurgaon (the canal still exists). But when the boats arrived, the image became too heavy and refused to be moved. And it has continued to be at Thakurgaon.

In connection with the question of rent-free lands the system of Mandal-ship also requires a more careful examination. Unlike many other areas in Bengal Mandals or village headmen are still to be found in many villages of this area. The selection of a headman shows varied types of compromise between a hereditary principle, election by the villagers themselves and appointment by the landlord. In many cases the post of the Mandal is attached to a particular family. But if the son of the old Mandal is too young, or incompetent or unwilling to accept the responsibility of making collections for the landlord, the post is given to some one else either from the same family or another. The landlord very often appoints the new Mandal but with the consent of the villagers. Benefit of the free lands endowed to the village deities is often an incident to Mandal-ship. In some cases the Mandal is himself responsible for utilizing part of the income from these lands for the worship of the deities and the other part goes to himself. In other cases the Mandal hands over the collections to the landlord, who is responsible for the worship. In some cases the system almost amounts to an ownership of the whole village as a community and management by the Mandal on their behalf. It is these cases and the principle according to which the Mandal is appointed—hereditary, elective or by nomination by the landlord—that seems worth fuller investigation to me.

Apart from definitely religious customs, I happened to come across some magical customs and beliefs also. Some of these are for curing the sick and exorcising evil spirits. A number of Muhammedans practise as experts in these magical ceremonies and are called 'Mahats'. I had no opportunity of observing the details of their magical rites. But I came to learn that skulls of cattle are an important magical object. In many village paths I came across these skulls, anointed with vermilion and scorched by lighting a fire of faggots or jute sticks. Many of the magical practices are associated with agriculture—as is natural with a rural population. I found clay models of the human figure or a human head placed in many fields. I first thought that they were scarecrows but was told that these figures were supposed to keep evil spirits away. A fertility rite is very obvious. On the day of the worship of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and plenty, a banana leaf is tied round fruit

trees. This is done both by Hindus and Muhammedans. I could scarcely find a mango tree or a jack-fruit tree which did not have this girdle of banana leaf. I was also told about a rain-foretelling magic. On the morning of Sripanchami, the day on which the goddess of learning is worshipped, the peasant goes into the field and chooses a *kachu* plant, ties together twelve leaves of the plant and calls them after the names of the twelve months. The next morning he goes and sees in which of the leaves there are dew drops and he knows that there will be rain in the corresponding months of the year. There are also a number of magical rites associated with the homestead. Many houses are found surrounded by bamboo poles with a white flag on top—again to preserve the house from evil spirits. When a villager decides to build a house and chooses a site, he puts four bamboo posts at the four corners and ties them with string and then he places some cooked rice in an earthen-ware vessel on the centre of the plot. If a bird or an animal comes for the rice soon, it is a good sign and the plot is all right for a house. Otherwise, he knows that there is some thing wrong with it and decides not to build his house there. Even after he has built a house, if there are a number of deaths or cases of sickness closely following each other, he decides that evil spirits have taken possession of the place—he abandons his homestead and moves over to another—either in another part of the same village or in a neighbouring one. One is struck by the number of these abandoned homesteads. And it is for this reason that one does not find that attachment to the homestead which is such a common feature of village life elsewhere in Bengal. I came across this when I had to talk to the villagers about the possibilities of consolidation of holdings by voluntary exchange. Some of them pointed out that they might have to abandon their house and move over to a new place and then, a consolidated holding near their old homestead would not be of much use to them.

These are jottings of unsystematic observation. But the area is in a remote corner of Bengal—the population is still primitive to a certain extent but in a state of flux. There may therefore be some features which are not commonly found elsewhere. These notes may therefore help some one who would like to enter into a comparative study of village customs of different parts or one who would take up a more systematic study of some of the questions this paper has barely indicated.

---

## A Sculptured Lintel of Gupta Date from Sārnāth.

By S. N. CHAKRAVARTI.

During the excavations at Sārnāth a door lintel (length 16' ; height 1' 10" ; thickness 1' 3½") with reliefs on its lower face was discovered in the area to the north-east of the *Main Shrine*. The reliefs were first described by Sir John Marshall and Professor Sten Konow<sup>1</sup> and subsequently by Paṇḍit Daya Ram Sahnī.<sup>2</sup>

The face on which the reliefs are found is divided into six panels, separated by representations of *vikāras*. The latter are of two kinds, alternating with each other. The first is the top of a *vikāra* with a lion's head flanked by two lions facing on opposite directions or two *Jambhala* figures ; below, a group of three musicians. The other kind represents the top of a *vikāra* with *āmalaka* flanked by leogryphs facing on opposite directions ; below, standing female between a pair of pitchers or standing female giving something to a child squatting on either side. The lower portion of the lintel exhibits lines of dentils and floral scroll.

Of the six panels, the one at the proper right extremity represents *Jambhala* with *bījapūraka* in his right hand and a money purse in his left hand, sitting in easy posture, with two female attendants, the one on the right with a bowl on the left hand and a *chāmara* in the right hand and the other on the left with a *chāmara* in the right hand and a harp (?) in the left hand. The other panel at the left extremity also exhibits *Jambhala* with the same attributes in his hand. But to his proper right is an amorous couple.

In the intervening four panels are, beginning from the proper right :

1. An ascetic whose right hand is being cut off by a man, while one woman remains kneeling down before him and another stands behind, both trying to dissuade him from the cruel act. His right hand is a little extended towards his aggressor in the gesture of delivering a sermon. The latter is shown wearing a diadem, a necklace of beads, and bracelets ; with a *churi*-bearer behind him ; with twisted upper garment hanging round his loins.

2. A group of five female figures, the middle or main figure dancing to the accompaniment of musical instruments played on by the rest.

<sup>1</sup> Annual Report of the Archæological Survey of India for 1907-08, pp. 70ff.

<sup>2</sup> Catalogue of the Museum of Archæology at Sārnāth, pp. 233ff., also see pp. 26-27 ; Guide to the Buddhist Ruins at Sārnāth, pp. 12, 49.

3. The same group of musicians as shown in the second panel. But the music has stopped.

4. An ascetic seated cross-legged; worshippers five in number, on both sides. This ascetic perhaps is the ascetic in the first panel and the five worshippers perhaps are the five female musicians in the second and third panels.

Now, what may these four panels represent? In making out the interrelation of the four panels one must start from the second and proceed to the third and the fourth and then to the first panel to the proper right. According to Marshall and Konow the scene in the first panel represents the Jātaka of *Kshāntivādi* and that in the fourth panel also refers to the same Jātaka. Evidently, the second and third panels, in the opinion of these two scholars, bear no relation to the other two panels. It has, however, been pointed out by Paṇḍit Daya Ram Sahni that the four panels bear relation to one another and that these illustrate the *Khantivādi-Jātaka*.

We possess, however, two versions of the above Jātaka in Sanskrit and Pāli. In the Sanskrit version it bears the title of *Kshāntivādi*,<sup>1</sup> which forms one of the Jātakas in the *Jātaka-mālā*, a Sanskrit rendering of only thirty-four Jātakas ascribed to *Ārya Śūra*. In the Pāli version it bears the title of *Khantivādi*.<sup>2</sup>

The question is—which of the two versions fits in with the illustration in the four panels? The Jātaka in Sanskrit may be narrated here to our advantage, noting where it differs from the corresponding Jātaka in Pāli.

The Bodhisattva was an ascetic who had forsaken the world. As he was in the habit of always preaching forbearance and teaching the Law from that point of view people called him *Kshāntivādin*. He dwelt in a forest. One hot season the king of that country seized with a great longing to play in the water went to that forest with his harem. The women began dancing and singing to the accompaniment of musical instruments. The king, as he was tired with incessant playing and drunkenness, laid himself down on his precious royal couch in a beautiful arbour and fell asleep. The women, when they perceived that the king was asleep, left him behind and rambled about jovially in the forest. In course of their rambling through the forest they saw the ascetic *Kshāntivādin* who was seated cross-legged under a tree in an arbour. They went to him in a humble attitude and sat down respectfully in a circle round him. The ascetic began preaching the Law to them. Meanwhile the king awoke and desired to continue his amorous sport. Having been informed by the female attendants that the women went to

<sup>1</sup> No. XXVIII of the *Jātaka-mālā* (ed. Kern), pp. 181-192; Transl. (Speyer), pp. 253-268.

<sup>2</sup> The *Jātaka* (ed. Fausboll), Vol. III, pp. 39-43; Transl. (ed. Cowell), Vol. III, pp. 26-29.



the other parts of the forest, the king accompanied by his female warriors marched through the forest after them. When he saw the ascetic preaching to his women he grew angry and rushed on him with the determination of striking him. The women, with anxious looks expressive of their trouble and consternation, rose from the earth and took leave of the ascetic. They went to meet the king and stood near him with folded hands. But they perceiving that the king was marching with a sword in the direction of the ascetic they placed themselves in his way, and surrounding him entreated him not to strike the ascetic. But the king did not listen to them. The ascetic preached the Law to him. But the king was in such a fit of wrath that he directed his sharp sword to the right hand of the ascetic, which was a little extended towards him, and severed it from his arm. He then cut off his both arms, his ears and nose, and his feet, one after the other. And as he was leaving the harbour after performing the cruel deed and at the very moment he passed out of the range of the ascetic's vision, he was swallowed up by earth.

In the corresponding Jātaka in Pāli we are told that the king, when he heard that his women were gone away and were sitting in attendance on a certain ascetic, in a rage seized his sword and went off in haste to punish the ascetic. Then those of the women that were most in favour, when they saw the king coming in a rage, went and took the sword from the king's hand and pacified him. Then the king came and stood by the ascetic and asked him what doctrine he was preaching. When the ascetic told him that he was preaching the doctrine of patience ('the not being angry when men abuse you and strike you and revile you'), the king summoned his executioner with a view to test the reality of the ascetic's patience. At the command of the king the executioner cut off the ascetic's hands, feet, nose and ears, one after the other. When the ascetic persisted in declaring that his patience was deep-seated within his heart, the king himself struck the ascetic above his heart with his foot. As a result of his sinful act the king was swallowed up by earth.

If we compare the above two versions of the story, it will be noticed that the story represented in the relief bears closer resemblance to the Sanskrit version than the Pāli one. Because the aggressor in the first panel is undoubtedly the King, not his executioner. The executioner (*choraghātaka*) on duty is described in the Jātakas<sup>1</sup> as having an axe and a scourge of thorns in his hand, dressed in a yellow garment and adorned with a red garland. But none of the attributes are found in the man who is depicted in the relief as striking the ascetic.

<sup>1</sup> The Jātaka (ed. Fausboll), Vol. III, pp. 41, 179; Transl. (ed. Cowell), Vol. III, pp. 27, 118.



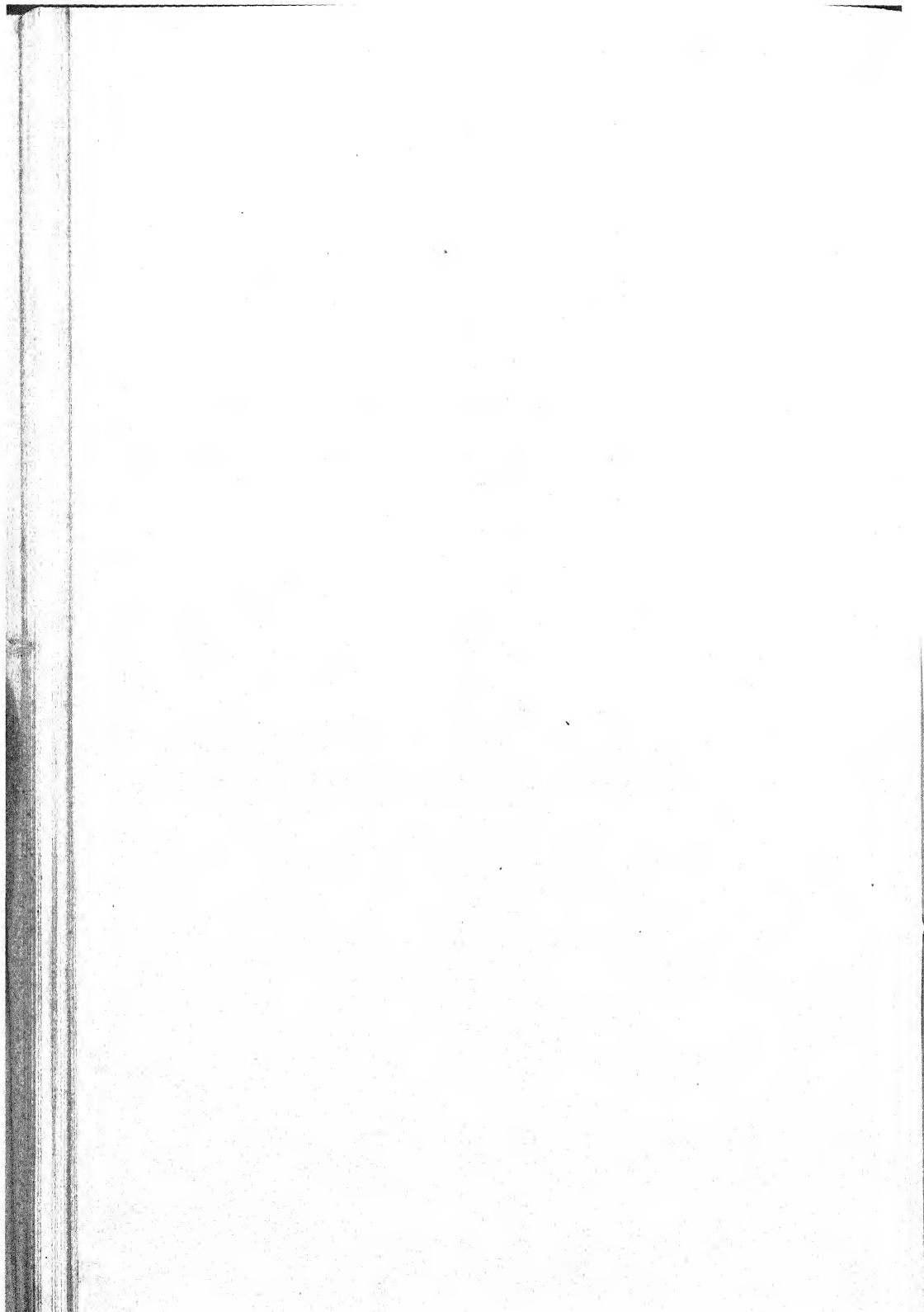
On the above considerations we must reject Pandit Daya Ram Sahni's view that the four panels illustrate the Pāli version of the Jātaka.

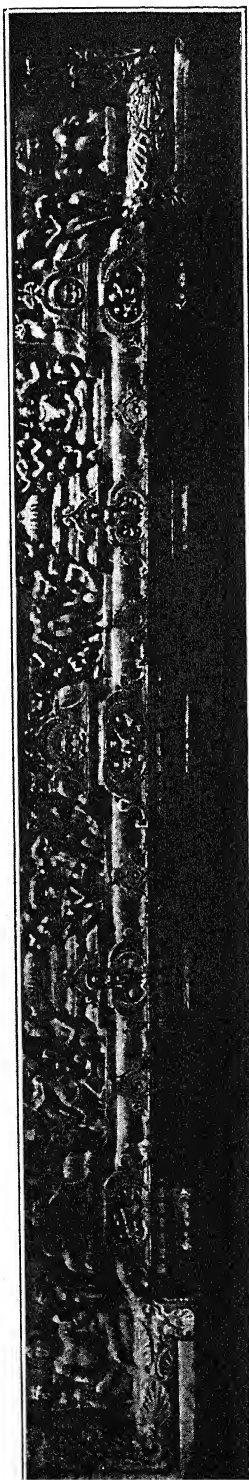
The next point to be considered is—was the story in the relief based upon the story of *Kshāntivādi* in the *Jātaka-mālā*, or upon a version similar to the Sanskrit story? To put it briefly, when did *Ārya Śūra*, the author of the *Jātaka-mālā*, flourish? <sup>1</sup> *Tāranātha* (p. 90) states that *Śūra* was known under different names, such as *Āśvaghosha*, *Mātrcheta*, *Pitrcheta*, *Durdarsha*, *Dharmika-subhūti*, and *Matichitra*. He also states that towards the end of his life *Śūra* was in correspondence with king *Kanika* and that he proposed to write the hundred Jātakas illustrating Buddha's acquirement of the ten Pāramitās, but, when he had finished thirty-four, he died. Kern, who thinks the tradition found in *Tāranātha* not probable, is induced by the purity and elegance of the language to place the *Jātaka-mālā* approximately between 550–650 A.D., to the age of *Kālidāsa* and *Varāhamihira*. Oldenberg observes that the work could not have been written after the end of the 7th century A.D., as it seems that the Chinese traveller *I-tsing* speaks of it. He, however, suggests finally that if No. 1349 of *Bunyu Nanjio's Catalogue*, a work of *Ārya Śūra*, is written by our author, the *Jātaka-mālā* could not be later than the end of the 4th or the beginning of the 5th century A.D. Speyer, following Oldenberg, observes that *Ārya Śūra* must have lived before 434 A.D., the year in which the work of *Ārya Śūra* (No. 1349 of *Nanjio's Catalogue*) was translated into Chinese. He also observes that on the ground of purity and elegance of the language the *Jātaka-mālā* can be placed a couple of centuries earlier than the date proposed by Kern. But he thinks that the author of our work is posterior to the author of the *Buddhacharita*, who was a contemporary of the great *Kushāna* emperor *Kanishka*, on the ground that the two works are entirely different in style and spirit. Regarding the date of *Ārya Śūra* Winternitz observes: 'I-tsing praises the *Jātakā-mālā* (or *Jātaka-mālās*) among the works which were particularly popular and much read in India in his time. Among the frescoes of the caves of Ajanta there are illustrations to the *Jātaka-mālā* with verses by *Ārya Śūra* in inscriptions. Palæographically, these inscriptions belong to the 6th century A.D. As another work by *Ārya Śūra* was already translated into Chinese in 434 A.D., the poet probably belongs to the 4th century A.D.'

According to *Tāranātha* (p. 181), however, *Śūra* was a great authority on metres. The author of the *Jātaka-mālā* also

<sup>1</sup> For the discussions on the date of *Ārya Śūra*, see J.R.A.S., 1893, pp. 306ff.; Speyer's translation of the *Jātaka-mālā*, pp. XVI-XVII, XXVII-XXVIII; A History of Indian Literature by Winternitz, Vol. II, p. 276.

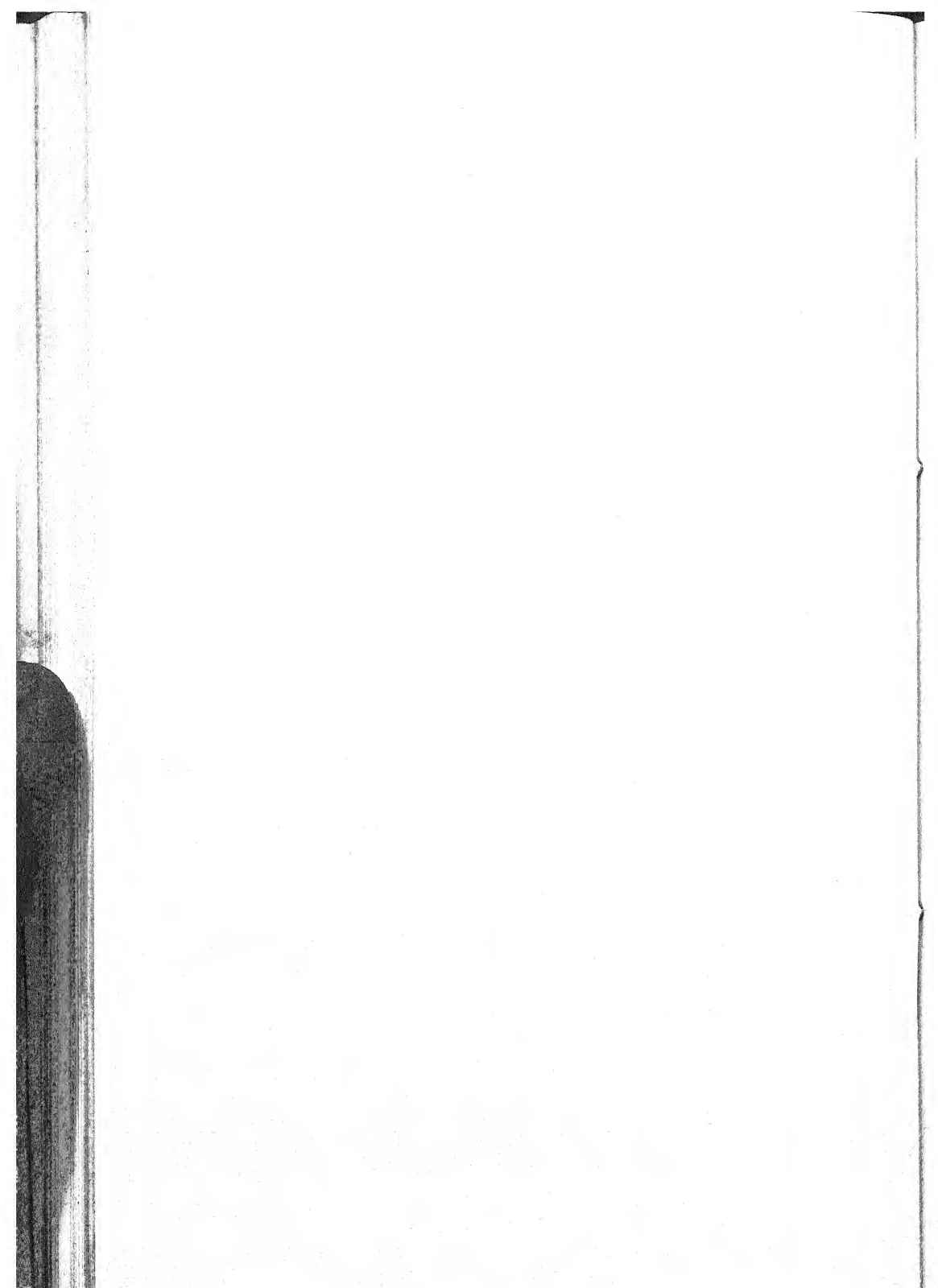
handled his metres with great skill. Moreover, an illustrative relief of the Gupta period fits in with a story in the *Jātaka-mālā* which, therefore, must have been in existence before that period. It is also reasonable to think that *Ārya Śūra* must have drawn his materials upon a similar collection of birth-stories.





A Sculptured Lintel of Gupta Date from Samath.

*Copyright reserved by the  
Archaeological Survey of India.*



**Location of the land donated by the Nidhanpur grant  
of Bhaskara-varman of Kāmarūpa.**

By PADMANATH BHATTACHARYYA.

Ever since the discovery of the Nidhanpur grant there have been two different opinions as regards the location of the land donated. It is quite natural to think that the land was located at the very place where the copper plates have been found, viz. in the Pañchakhanda Pargana in Sylhet (where Nidhanpur is located). Almost every other person than my humble self holds the above view. I have however been contending from the very beginning that the land granted related to a place in Rangpur, and not in Sylhet.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Nalinikanta Bhattasali of the Dacca Museum has recently contributed an article to the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. I, 1935, No. 3, and has attempted to prove that the locality of the grant was in Sylhet, and as he is the most authoritative of all who hold the above view, I think it desirable to publish a rejoinder to Dr. Bhattasali's article stating also my grounds why I consider that the land was not located in Sylhet.

But before proceeding to do so, I should state here something about a new point, viz. whether the plates were unearthed at Nidhanpur or found in a tank at Supātalā nearby. In April, 1926, I went to Nidhanpur to inspect the spot of the find. The finder Musharraf Chaukidar had died long before, and the place was a deserted one. On enquiry I learnt that his daughter lived at a neighbouring village, and I went to her place and asked her if she knew anything about the plates discovered by her father. She said that she had been present when the plates—numbering seven in all—tied with a ring headed by a laddle-shaped seal, had been dug by her father out of a mound within the compound of his *bāri*.<sup>2</sup> So, although Babu Pavitrnanath Das was kind enough to inform me also, about his story that the plates had been discovered at Supātalā, I did not put much faith in it.

Now let me state why I am unable to accept Dr. Bhattasali's allegations, as convincing :—

---

<sup>1</sup> Rai Bahadur K. L. Baruā, Editor, Journal of the Assam Research Society, agrees with me so far that the locality of the grant was not in Sylhet.

<sup>2</sup> Śrīmān Sudhāmaya Bhaṭṭācāryya, son of the late pandit Rāmtanu Nyāyasāñkhyachunchu, whose guest I was, accompanied me when I went to Nidhanpur and the neighbouring village.

1. The grant pertained to the Mayūra-sālmalāgrahāra Kshetram<sup>1</sup> which means a *field* attached to Mayūra-sālmalā-grahāra.<sup>2</sup> A field (which was a rice field, in all probability) must have been a flat and smooth plot : but the area within the boundary as given by Dr. Bhattasali—comprising almost the whole of pargana Pañchakhanda, is chiefly a hilly tract which has very little of rice field in it. Dr. Bhattasali has apparently depended on the reports of other people who probably did not state the real nature of the tract.<sup>3</sup>

2. The grant was made by king Bhāskara-varman who flourished in the 7th century A.D. : even then—i.e. 1,300 years ago—Gaṅgiṇikā and Śushka Kauśikā (both dried beds of whilom rivulets) were utilized as rice producing areas, as will be seen from the following extracts from the inscription :—

यदेत् कौशिकोपचितकक्षेत्रं तत्फलं प्रतिग्राहकब्राह्मणानामेव ।

यत्तु गङ्गिण्युपचितकक्षेत्रं तदयथालिखितकब्राह्मणैः समं

विभज्यतामिति । (ll. 126-128)<sup>4</sup>

[Meaning : The produce of that (part of the) field added by the (dried bed of) Kauśikā belongs (already) to the donee Brāhmaṇas : but (the produce of) what has been added by the Gaṅgiṇikā should be shared equally by the Brāhmaṇas as enumerated (above).]

Such having been the case 1,300 years ago, Dr. Bhattasali now comes up to identify both of them as rivulets with waters in their beds—one as Chhotagāṅg (small river) *alias* Marā (dead) Kuśiyara and the other as Lulā gāṅg (river Lulā)! Any remark on this is superfluous.

3. The land was bounded on the East by Śushka Kauśikā and on the West by Gaṅgiṇikā :—their beds having been extended further southwards the points where they ceased to be the boundary of the grant were marked by logs of hewn fig tree.<sup>5</sup> Then again, as the two river beds were wide apart from each other another log of hewn fig tree was posted in the middle to mark the southern boundary.

<sup>1</sup> Vide ll. 50-51 of the Nidhanpur grant inscriptions : pp. 16-17, Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali.

<sup>2</sup> Agrahāra = A village of Brāhmaṇa residents.

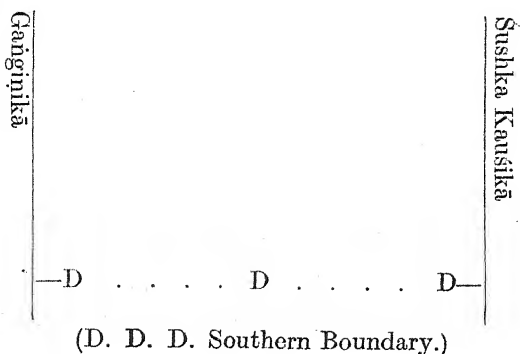
<sup>3</sup> In a letter to Dr. Bhattasali I asked him to visit the locality himself which apparently he has failed to do.

<sup>4</sup> Vide p. 25, Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali.

<sup>5</sup> The Sanskrit word is 'Dumbarī chehveda' which means 'Chhinna dumbarī' under the grammatical dictum रुद्धमिद्धिनो भावो द्रव्यवत् प्रकाशते ; or the word 'Chheda' has a meaning of 'khaṇḍa' (section) (Vide Śabda-kalpadruma).



Thus :—



According to Dr. Bhattasali 'dumbarīchcheda's meant pools or sections of the dried up river which retained water in the shape of figs, i.e. circular of (or ?) irregularly circular sections'. From what has been stated already, it is apparent that both the dried up rivers Śuśhka Kauśikā and Gaṅḡinikā could not have retained water in them in any shape : and if, for argument's sake, any fig-like pools had existed in the 7th century it is preposterous to suppose that such pools will exist now (after 1,300 years) to satisfy Dr. Bhattasali's interpretation—which, by the way, is very ingenious but quite fanciful. The word 'chhedā' might mean a cutting, a section : but never a pool or *bīl* (as he says further on). *Bīla* is a Sanskrit word and if the writer of the inscription really meant what Dr. Bhattasali does, he would have written 'Dumbarī-bīla'.<sup>1</sup> At the South-East corner of the field granted was the 'Śuśhka Kauśikā' marked by one 'Dumbarī-Chcheda' Dr. Bhattasali has as many as three big *bīls* whereof only the Northern one has any connection with the Marā Kuśiyārā that represents Śuśhka Kauśikā. The southern boundary of the grant was also marked by one dumbarī-chcheda : Dr. Bhattasali has two *bīls*. At the South-West corner the Gaṅḡinikā was marked by a dumbarī-chcheda : But Dr. Bhattasali's unnamed *bīl* seems to have no connection whatever with the Lulā gāṅg that represents Gaṅḡinikā.

Dr. Bhattasali objects to my interpretation on two grounds : (a) that a log of hewn fig tree was not a boundary mark that would last long, and (b) one such log was not enough to mark the Southern boundary that, according to Dr. Bhattasali, was about 2½ miles long. As to (a), I should state that even a 'Kumbhakāra-gartta' (Potter's pit) and Pushkarinī (tank) that would have been silted up in no time, marked respectively the

<sup>1</sup> Or 'Dumbarī-bīla' ; cf. the boundary of Indrapāla's copper plates grant No. 1 'kushtha-mākkhiyānabīla-purvah', L. 45, p. 123, of the Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali.

North-West and the North-East boundary of this very field. Moreover, in the enumeration of the trees and plants in *Manu-saṁhitā* VIII, verses 246-7, occur even shrubs, canes and bamboos, that can mark the boundary of a plot of land ; and in fact in the descriptions of boundaries of the various grants comprised in the *Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali*, we find canes, bamboos,<sup>1</sup> trunks of trees and even an ant-hill.

As to (b) even admitting Dr. Bhattasali's estimate (viz. that the Southern boundary was  $2\frac{3}{4}$  miles long) a fairly big log of a fig tree, as high as a man, planted in the middle could be seen from both the ends of Southern boundary line as the field was a practically flat and smooth area.<sup>2</sup>

4. Dr. Bhattasali thinks that we have been misled by an impression that *Gaṅginikā* was unknown in Sylhet. I would point out that I stated in the *Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali* (p. 6, footnote 1) that it was known in Sylhet as *Gāṅginā*.

5. On the North-Western boundary there was 'Kumbhākāra garttāh' (singular) meaning a potter's pit. Dr. Bhattasali interprets it as a 'series of cavities in the earth the handy-work of potters'.

6. The northern boundary was marked by a big *Jāṭali* tree which Dr. Bhattasali takes to be the same as *Jhāṭa* that means 'jungle'. *Jāṭali* is a Sanskrit word and has an alternative form *Jhāṭali* meaning a tree named 'Jhārli' in Bengal and 'Mokha' in Marathi.<sup>3</sup> *Jhāṭa* is a quite different word. Not satisfied with even *Jhāṭa* (as it was perishable) Dr. Bhattasali converts *Jāṭali* into *Chāṭal* which is the name of a *bil*<sup>4</sup> shown in his map.

7. A person named *Khāsoka* had a tank that marked the North-Eastern boundary of the grant.<sup>5</sup> He was dead and gone 1,300 years ago : yet Dr. Bhattasali finds his name commemorated in two modern villages about a mile apart from each

<sup>1</sup> *Vide*, for example, p. 158 of the *Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali* where are mentioned bamboos (even a bamboo fencing) a trunk of *Dumbari* tree and, last of all, an ant-hill.

<sup>2</sup> I must state, however, that although the area was an extensive one I cannot agree with Dr. Bhattasali's estimate of  $5 \times 2\frac{3}{4}$  miles = 26,620 bighas allotting about 132 bighas to each of 200 shares. I would not allot more than  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of that (i.e. 33 bighas) to each share—enough for a family of *Brāhmaṇas* reputedly plain living in those days. So Dr. Bhattasali's estimate of length and breadth must be reduced to half and Southern boundary line might not be more than about 11 or 12 furlongs long though it lay between the dried beds of two rivers that had been apparently small ones.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* Addenda at p. 201, *Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali*.

<sup>4</sup> Which according to Dr. Bhattasali was imperishable—so exists even now (after 1,300 years) to give evidence in his favour.

<sup>5</sup> The spot where Dr. Bhattasali expected to find *Khāsoka*'s tank has been marked by \* (asterisk) in his map—but absence of the tank there should I hope convince him at last of the 'perishable nature' of a boundary mark.

other : one named Khāsā (that means good) and the other Khasir (Kha=sky, Śir=head ; probably so called on account of its lofty position).

8. The grant was within the District of Chandrapuri and Dr. Bhattasali has found a village named Chandrapur a few miles off the alleged locality of the grant. He does not state what marks of antiquity there are in the village : the name Chandrapur or Chāndpur is commonly found in several villages in the District of Sylhet.

I should now state here why I have been persistently maintaining that the donated land could not have belonged to Sylhet.

1. Yuān Chwāng who had visited Kāmarūpa in Bhāskara-varman's time spoke of Shih-li-cha-ta-lo, North-East of Samatata, as one of the six kingdoms not visited by him. This Shih-li-chatalo was Śrī-haṭṭa<sup>1</sup> (Sylhet) and apparently it was then a kingdom not included in Kāmarūpa visited by the Chinese traveller.

2. That there were independent rulers of Sylhet, about that time is proved by a curious insertion, on the top of an inscription dated about 600 A.D., of the word 'Śrīhaṭṭadhiśwarebhyah'.<sup>2</sup>

3. That Sylhet was included in Kāmarūpa is generally assumed from verses like the one in the *Yogini Tantra*, part I, patal 2, defining the bounday of Kāmarūpa—

करतोयां समाश्रित्य यावद्विकारवासिनीम् ।

× × × ×

दर्द्विणे ब्रह्मपुत्रस्य लाक्षायाः सङ्गमावधि ॥

But even in the same Tantra, the name of Sylhet is mentioned separately from Kāmarūpa—

ऐशान्यां पूर्वभागे च कामरूपं विजानिहि ।

× × × ×

औहट्टमपि पूर्वे च × ×

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bhattasali, I know, differs from me, and maintains with some Europeans *savants* like M. Finot of Indo-China, that Shih-li-chatalo was Srikshetra (=Promé in Burma) ; but I regret that I could not see eye to eye with them. (Those who like to see my original article on the identification, may read *J.R.A.S.*, January, 1920 ; and my rejoinders on M. Finot's articles were published in *Hindustan Review*, July, 1924, and *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. IV, No. 1.)

<sup>2</sup> The inscription was on a temple of Mahādeva, dedicated by Iśwarā Devi, a Queen of Jālandhara. *Vide Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. 1, part 1, p. 20.

This indicates that Sylhet fell within the spiritual boundary of sacred Kāmarūpa, but was independent of it politically.<sup>1</sup>

4. Tradition has it that the very locality (Pañchakhaṇḍa) was about that very time (641 A.D.) under the rule of a king of Tipparah.<sup>2</sup>

5. The Mayūra Śālmala-agrahāra belonged to Chandrapuri<sup>3</sup> Vishaya : the name of this Chandrapuri occurs in the description of the boundary of a village granted by Vanamāla Deva that was situated west of Trisrotā (modern Teesta in Rangpur).

6. Although the grant related to a land that was not in Sylhet, yet I have given my reasons how the copper plates could be found in the Pañchakhaṇḍa Pargana in Sylhet. There were two Brāhmanas designated as 'Paṭṭaka-pati' (master of the copper plates); one Sādhāraṇa Swāmin of the Prāchetasa gotra (clan); and the other, Monoratha Swāmin of the Kātyāyana gotra.<sup>4</sup> After some time the family of Sādhāraṇa Swāmin became extinct; and in fact there is hardly any trace of a Brāhmana of the Prāchetasa gotra nowadays. So the descendants of Monoratha Swāmin of Kātyāyana gotra became the sole possessors of the copper plates. Now there is a tradition, the same as already mentioned above, that the place Pañchakhaṇḍa owes its name to importation therein of the Brāhmanas of five (*pañcha*) gotras by a certain king of Tipparah. They in their turn invited Brāhmanas of five other gotras to come and live with them in Pañchakhaṇḍa and one of those gotras was Kātyāyana and even now Brāhmanas of this gotra are found in the locality. The plates were brought over to Pañchakhaṇḍa by the Brāhmanas of the Kātyāyana gotra—the descendants of the said Monoratha Swāmin—who came here.

All of what I have stated above as reasons for my maintaining that this land granted by Bhāskara-varman did not belong to Sylhet, have also been stated in the introductory notes to the copper plates inscription of Bhāskara-varman published in the

<sup>1</sup> In a Buddhistic publication named Sādhana Mālā, we find Śrihatta in Sādhana, No. 234 (also Sirihatta—how like Shih-li-chatalo of Yuān Chwāng—in Sādhana, No. 232), mentioned as a place quite distinct from Kāmarūpa. Vide Rai Bahadur K. L. Barua's article on Kāmarūpa and Vajrayāna in Vol. II, No. 2, *Journal of the Assam Research Society*.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Bhattachali, however, has cleverly substituted the name of Bhāskara-varman in place of that of this king of Tipparah affirmed in the tradition.

<sup>3</sup> It should be stated that the reading, as published in the *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1840, was Chandrapari, which being meaningless has been corrected into 'Chandrapuri' in the Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali as the reading published in the said Journal was full of mistakes and inaccuracies: vide my remarks in the preface of the Tezpur grant of Vanamāla Deva (pp. 55-56) of the Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali. The original plates have unfortunately been missing; so all chances for checking the corrections have gone along with the plates.

<sup>4</sup> Bhāskara-varman's copper plates inscription, ll. 54-56 (p. 17, Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali).

Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali<sup>1</sup> a copy whereof I presented to Dr. Bhattasali as soon as it was published about four years ago. It is very strange that he has not cared to meet any of my arguments stated in the Śāsanāvali :—nay, although he has been good enough to mention many of my articles published in various Journals—English and Vernacular—he has not favoured the Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali with any notice whatever, although it is in this book that my views on the inscriptions of Kāmarūpa attained a fair finality.

---

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller account, read p. 7 *et. seq.* of the Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali.



### A Buddha Image from Kurkihār.

By A. C. BANERJI.

Kurkihār is now a small village, about 23 miles east of Bodh-Gaya. It was visited by Major Kittoe in 1846 and 1848,<sup>1</sup> who dug up a large number of statues from one of the mounds, and deposited them with the Asiatic Society of Bengal; from which institution these have now found a safe refuge in the Indian Museum, at Calcutta. The place was also visited by late Sir Alexander Cunningham, during the working season of 1861-62.<sup>2</sup> After Cunningham's visit, Kurkihār remained neglected, and its mounds became the favourite quarries of modern builders. The site has recently gained public notice by the accidental discovery of a large number of metal images of the Pāla period described by Mr. K. P. Jayaswal.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of this contribution is not to discuss the ruins of Kurkihār, nor to mourn the careless regard shown by our countrymen to the ancient remains of their land, but to describe one of the sculptures found at the place. The image under consideration is of black basalt and measures 4' 9" x 2' 9".<sup>4</sup> The whole stele may be divided into three parts. First, the throne (*vajrāsana*), the front of which consists of number of recesses formed by six pilasters. Each of the niches at either end, contain an Elephant, the niches next to them is occupied by female figures, kneeling on either of their knees. The female figure on the right of the central recess, which contains the lion of the Sākya race, is kneeling on a prostrate figure of Ganeśa, with right hand upraised. Evidently the figure is that of Aparājītā. The female figure on the left is probably the 'Earth-goddess' attesting Gautama's right to seat on the *vajrāsana*. Above the throne is double rows of lotus petals (*viśvapadma*) on which we find the figure of Gautama Buddha seated in *vajraparyāṅk-āsana*; the fingers of the right hand touching the earth. His body is covered with drapery. On his right we find Maitreya with his right hand in *vyākhyāna-mudrā*, and the left hand holding a *Nāgakeśara* flower.<sup>5</sup> He bears on his crown a small

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. xvi, pt. i, pp. 80 and 602, and Vol. xvii, pt. ii, pp. 234 and 536.

<sup>2</sup> Cunningham, *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey*, Vol. i, pp. 14-16.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the Indian Society for Oriental Art*, Vol. ii, pp. 70-82.

<sup>4</sup> J. Anderson—*Catalogue and Handbook of the Archaeological Collection in the Indian Museum*, Calcutta, 1883, Vol. ii, p. 73.

<sup>5</sup> B. Bhattacharya—*The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, pp. 13-14, Calcutta.



*stūpa*. On the right is Padmapāni, with a lotus in his left hand and Amitābha on his head; and his right hand in *varadā-mudrā*.<sup>1</sup> The effeminate grace of these figures led Anderson to describe them as female figures.<sup>2</sup> Just behind the shoulders of the main image is a pilaster of pleasing design, at the centre of which we find the halo (*prabhāmaṇḍala*) with flames issuing out of it. On either side of the halo are miniature figures of Buddha; that on the left is in *dharma-chakra-pravartana-mudrā*; the arms of the figure on the right having been broken, its attitude is not quite clear. Just over the head of the main image, is the Bo-Tree (*ficus-religiosa*), flanked on either side by the figures of Vidyā-dharas. It is clear that this slab, like many other productions of the eastern Indian school of mediæval sculptures, depicts three particular incidents of Gautama-Buddha's life: (1) The enlightenment at Uruvela, (2) the first sermon at the Deer-Park, and (3) ?.

The stele is remarkable for two reasons. One of which is the pedestal. There are scores of specimens of Buddha in *bhūmi-sparśa-mudrā*, in the Indian Museum; but none of these possess a pedestal like the one under discussion, depicting as it does, the earth-goddess as well as Aparājītā. Moreover, in mediæval images, we very rarely meet with the figure of the earth-goddess when Buddha is shown in the attitude. The custom seems to have gradually fallen into disuse after Post-Gupta period.

The central lion is a very poor production, but the sculptor has attained a considerable measure of success in modelling the fore-parts of the uncouth elephants. The two female figures are remarkable for their slim beauty, and proportion. The central figure of Gautama Buddha as well as those of the attendant Bodhisattvas are endowed with a graceful roundness of the female form. The shoulders of Buddha are as broad as that of an elephant, while the waist has been made slender like a lion. The modelling of the contour of the body, which is in high relief, produces the impression of roundness and volume. The soft texture of the skin and the drapery has been carefully brought out. The folds of the drapery are distinguished by single rhythmic incisions. The hairs and the Bo-Tree have been schematically treated. The stele belongs to the 11th or 12th century A.D.

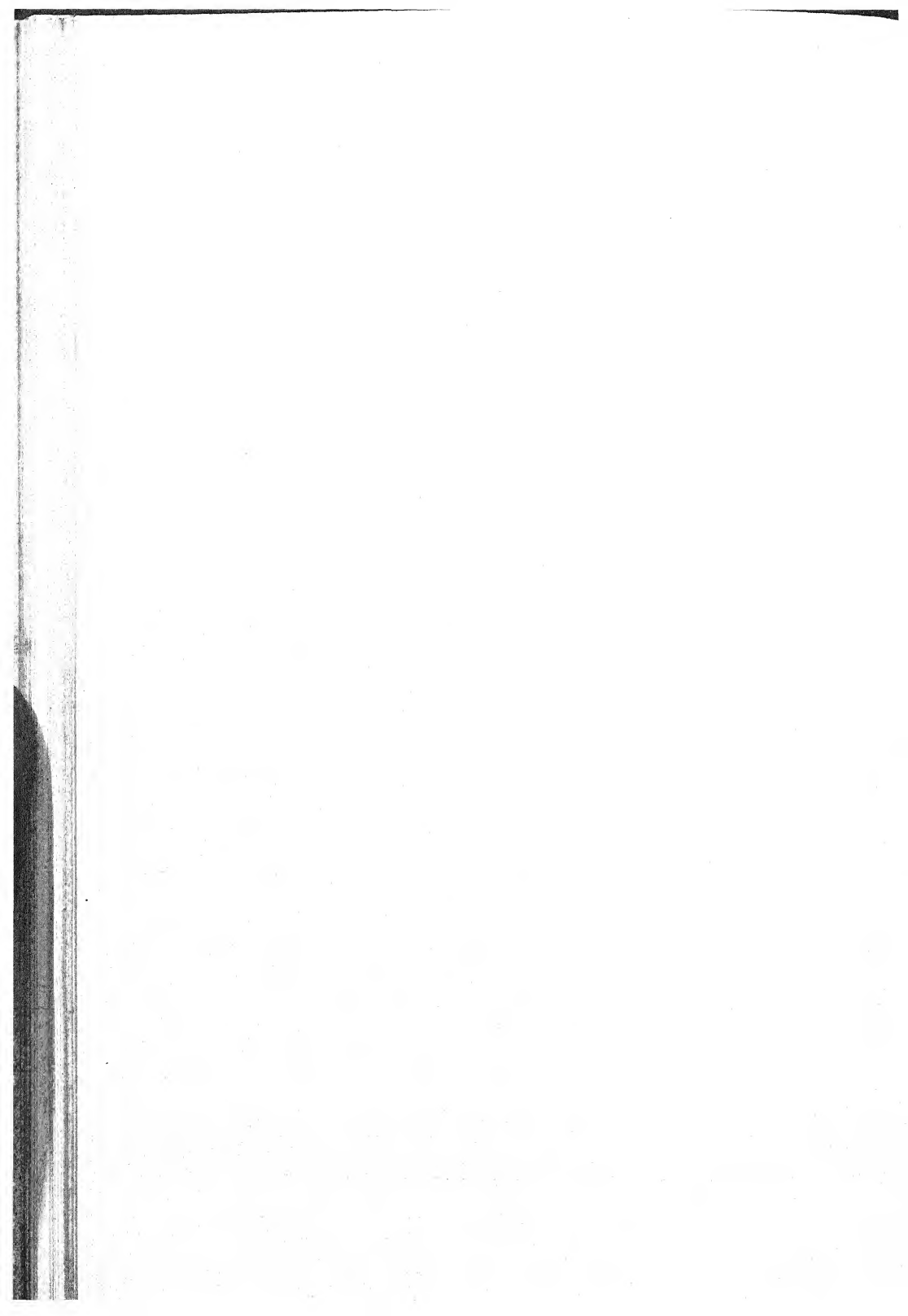
<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 73.



An image of Buddha from Kurkihār, now in the Indian Museum.

*Copyright. Archaeological Survey of India.*



Abū Nukhailah—A Post-classical Arab Poet.

By A. H. HARLEY.

Abū Nukhailah is generally stated to have been his name, and not his *kunya*h or to-name. Ibn Qutaibah however holds that it was the latter, and that he was so styled because his mother gave birth to him beside the trunk of a palm-tree (*nakhlah*)<sup>1</sup>; it is also said to have been given him because of a small palm-tree which he frequented.<sup>2</sup> Abu'l-Junaid and Abu'l-'Irimās are mentioned as his to-names.

His lineage has been traced back through the Banū Himmān and Banū Sa'd to the tribe Tamīm; the Himmān were settled in the quarter of Basrah called from them Himmān. On his return from Syria after the death of his father, this enviable genealogy fell however under suspicion. It seems that he had not seen eye to eye with his father, who regarded him as a disobedient and froward youth, and forbade him the house. Later when opportunity favoured, he took what measures he could to establish himself as a man of pedigree, and is quoted as saying of himself:—

I'm a scion of Sa'd—I'm placed amid the 'Ajam,— (*Rajaz*).  
Uncles of both sides I have 'mongst whom I choose to look.<sup>3</sup>

When driven from his father's house he went out among the Badawī seeking sustenance, and seized the opportunity of mixing with them to study poetry and practice the art of versifying. The primitive iambic measure of *rajaz* appealed most to him. This relic of a cruder age had adapted itself to a newer need, and was destined to enjoy through full two centuries, beginning from about the time of the Prophet, a period of remarkable efflorescence. But he also practised the more developed verse-forms in vogue for the *qaṣīdah*.<sup>4</sup> His lines began to be repeated in desert and town, and at length he made a bid for a hearing in the court at Damascus. There he obtained access to Maslamah, a younger son of 'Abdu'l-Malik, and is said to have approached him with this panegyric in *ṭawīl*-measure<sup>5</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Qutaibah, *K. ash-Shi'r*... (ed. Cairo, 1332 H.), 142.

<sup>2</sup> *Rannātu'l-Mahālith*... (Selections from *K. al-Aghānī*; referred to here as *Bei.*): *Bei.* I, 307, *f.n.*

<sup>3</sup> *Qut.*, *l.c.*

<sup>4</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 139 (ed. Egypt, 1323 H.).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

O Maslam, scion of all the Khalifahs,  
 knight in war's tumult and mountain on earth,  
 I thank thee,—and thanks is linked with piety ;  
 yet not each thou givest a favour, fulfils ;  
 and thou didst throw, when I visited thee,  
 about me a wrap of ample length and breadth,  
 and enlivened my name and fame obscure,—  
 and there are grades of distinction in fame.

In the subsequent conversation with Maslamah he claimed to be the best *rajaz*-writer among the Arabs, but when he was put to the test his memory failed him ; nothing occurred to him but a recent *rajaz*-poem by the reputed Ru'bah, son of the famous *rājiz* al-'Ajjāj ; his discomfiture was not yet complete till he began reciting it as his own, when Maslamah bade him bother no longer for he could repeat it better himself. Soon however his eulogies in this measure earned for him a place with him, and many favours and much monetary reward.

Not only was *rajaz* his cherished verse-form, but he does not appear to have been too scrupulous about quoting as his own the compositions of the more famous *rājiz* Ru'bah. One such instance is said to have occurred in the presence of 'Umar b. Hubairah ; unfortunately for him Ru'bah was present, and overheard and rebuked him ; Abū Nukhailah himself relieved the tenseness of the situation with a laugh and said : ' Am I other than one of your objects of good deeds, and your follower, and responsible to you ? ' <sup>1</sup>

Among the poems which probably commended him to Maslamah should be included the following, which he read to him when the latter returned in 102 H., 720, from battle at 'Aqr, near Bābil, against Yazid b. al-Muhallab, who was there slain, and whose whole house perished soon after. <sup>2</sup>

Maslam, O Maslamah of battles, (*Rajaz*).  
 thou art free from bane of defects,—  
 pith of generosity and fine quality ;  
 where no *thiqāf* is, would be no training ;  
 we rend with him the coverings of hearts ;  
 the people are become sheep to the wolves.

In reward of his services Maslamah was at once made governor of Iraq and Khurasan, but however competent as a strategist in the field he apparently did not possess the characteristics of the administrator ; he appointed as his lieutenant in Khurasan his son-in-law Sa'id 'Khudhainah', <sup>3</sup> who quickly set the heterogeneous elements in commotion and was deposed

<sup>1</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 145.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 140 ; *Tab.*, II, 1415 (ed. de Goeje) ; as-Suyūfī, *Ta'rikhu'l-Khulafā'*, 247-8 (ed. Calcutta, 1273 H., 1857).

<sup>3</sup> *Tab.*, II, 1418 ; Bevan, *K. an-Naqā'id* . . . , 363.

in 103 H.<sup>1</sup>; he himself did not remit to Damascus the surplus revenues of his province, and in the very year of his appointment, 102 H., was replaced by 'Umar b. Hubairah, and thereupon returned to Syria. Henceforward his services seem to have been of a military nature; in 114 H. his effective measures defeated the Khāqān of the Turkomans.<sup>2</sup> He died in 122 H.<sup>3</sup> in flight from the Turkomans, who had enveloped his troops; the date 121 has also been given.<sup>4</sup> Whether his friendly connection with the poet persisted long or close is not mentioned, but it is stated that the latter was on his way to Hishām b. 'Abdi'l-Malik (r. 105-125 H., 724-743) when he learned of his erstwhile patron's death.

He seems to have been a stranger to Hishām at this time, and needed to be introduced. He made the acquaintance of two courtiers, a Qaysite and a Yamanite, and decided to exploit the services of the former as the nearer of kin and the likelier, and was advised by him to keep supplication out of his eulogy otherwise Hishām would be displeased. When he was duly introduced by this sponsor next day, he found that Abu'n-Najm, of Banū 'Ijl, had preceded him into the presence, and was ready to declaim a *rajaz*-poem he had composed.

The tribes Sa'd and 'Ijl had earned a name in *rajaz*.<sup>5</sup> Abu'n-Najm, who belonged to 'Ijl, lived to a ripe old age; his literary activity appears to have extended backwards into the reign of 'Abdu'l-Malik (r. 65-86 H.), and forwards into that of Hishām b. 'Abdi'l-Malik. He specialized in *rajaz*, and it has been claimed that he wrote the best *urjūzah* in Arabic.

On this occasion Abu'n-Najm went on at great length, and included in his poem supplication, and urged in his suit:

Time's harshness inclined towards me,                    (*Rajaz*).  
and the surplus slaves were sold,  
at a price which involved a loss,  
and colt on colt, and stallion too.<sup>6</sup>

Hishām's face showed his vexation. Abū Nukhailah states that at this juncture he asked and obtained permission to recite his *rajaz*-poem<sup>6</sup>:

When she I desire comes to me, like honey  
which with date-juice is mixed, during sleep,  
what cooling for one cured through coolness is she,  
who is mindful of the camels with sores!

<sup>1</sup> Tab., II, 1436.

<sup>2</sup> Tab., II, 1560, 1562.

<sup>3</sup> Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom* . . . (tr. by Weir), 351 f.n.

<sup>4</sup> al-Yāfi'i, *Mir'ātu'l-Janān* . . . , I, 257 (ed. Hyderabad).

<sup>5</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 74; XVIII, 140; *Qut.*, l.c., 4, 28 (ed. de Goeje).

<sup>6</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 141; *Bei.*, I, 310.

I say to the reddish camels : ' Quick, press on ! '—  
 and they speed on with exceeding fast pace—  
 how many a brave one has strayed therein,  
 and one after another who were in haste !—  
 they are wearing, as they go with constant gait,  
 night that is coloured like smooth Persian cloke,  
 unto the Chief of the Believing, the gracious,  
 lord of Ma'add and the rest besides,  
 one such as men call proud of bearing and brave,  
 possessing glory and regard beside ;  
 in his face a full moon appears, auspicious,—  
 thou art the hero, the chief in effort grim ;  
 thou art vested with it,<sup>1</sup> in whom power is united ;  
 when thou dost rise, the thunder-cloud pours lavish shower.

It brought him a reward within a few days, and led to other favours.

He later turned against his Umayyad patrons, even indulging in satire of them, and went over to the Abbasids, who had then come to power, not from any political principles but the motive of personal advantage ; he designated himself ' Poet (*Shā'ir*) of the Banu Hāshim ' .<sup>2</sup> The above-quoted *rajaz*-passage addressed to Hishām was now included in the famous *urjūzah* with final consonant *dāl* and dedicated to as-Saffāh,<sup>3</sup> an instance of literary opportunism not without precedent or successor.<sup>4</sup>

A story which illustrates the quick effectiveness of the metrical lampoon is told of him in connection with one whose identity is not entirely certain, Shabīb b. Shaibah<sup>5</sup> (or Shabbah),<sup>6</sup> but who was apparently the well-known *Khaṭīb*, or public orator, and who was with al-Mansūr at the close of his life, and was also in attendance later on al-Mahdi. Abū Nukhailah observed him wearing robes he fancied for himself, and asked him for them. Shabīb made him a promise of them, but omitted to implement it, and found himself pilloried in the lines :—

My people, take not Shabīb for chief,— (Rajaz).  
 a cheat,<sup>7</sup> a cheat's son, and false.—  
 Does a she-wolf bear but a wolf ?<sup>8</sup>

Shabīb sent the robes to him, and the gift though belated turned abuse to praise :

<sup>1</sup> I.e., the Khilāfat.

<sup>2</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 139.

<sup>3</sup> *Infra*, p. 62.

<sup>4</sup> *Agh.*, III, 54 ; ' *Ajabnāma* (E. G. Browne, Mem. Vol.), Art. Krenkow, p. 262.

<sup>5</sup> *Agh.*, II, 33 ; VI, 136 ; al-Jāhīz, *K. al-Bayān* . . . , I, 278 (ed. Cairo, 1351 H., 1932) ; Tab., III, 430.

<sup>6</sup> Tab., IX, 312 (ed. Egypt, 1326 H.) ; *Agh.*, XVIII, 145.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Agh.*, XVIII, 145.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 139, 145.



When Sa'd go at morn to their Shabīb, (Rajaz).  
 their strong man and their orator,  
 from the sunrise till its setting  
 I wonder at their mass and quality.

Both these *rajaz*-passages however occur in another setting, where they would also be appropriate, but the slight circumstantial evidence available favours the former. The poet's assertion as to his origin had been impugned, as has already been mentioned. In his desire to rehabilitate himself as of respectable lineage in Banū Sa'd, he bought a building plot in the quarter of Basrah called Himmān after his own connections settled there, the Banū Himmān b. Sa'd b. Zayd Manāt b. Tamīm.<sup>1</sup> He apparently intended a quite imposing residence, for he had been richly rewarded for his verse,<sup>2</sup> and now besides he asked for financial help in constructing it, and people gave to him in order to purchase protection from his tongue and his mischief. Shabīb was approached, but excused himself, and this provoked from the poet the three satirical lines quoted above. Shabīb made a stand saying: 'I will not give anything notwithstanding this composition, for he has held one hand flat for an offer, and filled the other with ordure, and said: "If one puts something in my flat hand, [good and well]; otherwise I have filled it with my ordure", for the sake of a residence....' The tribal elders interceded, but Shabīb would not give anything. On the other side Abū Nukhailah swore that he would not cease to assail his honour till he yielded. Thereupon fear came to Shabīb and he sent him what he asked. The poet went to his house early next day, while he was seated giving audience, and delivered himself in the above four lines of *rajaz*.

There is a doublet however connected with the building of the house; Khālid b. Šafwān here takes the place of Shabīb.<sup>3</sup> Khālid was also a famous public orator; he had once gone on deputation to Hishām b. 'Abdī'l-Malik, and was of the number of those who had night-discussions with as-Saffāh<sup>4</sup>; he was gifted with ready and impressive expression in *saj'* (rhymed prose)<sup>5</sup>; he is quoted by Shabīb as his authority for a narrative concerning Hishām<sup>6</sup>; and he was included in the quartette of Arabia's most miserly persons.<sup>7</sup> According to this account he reproached in *saj'* Abū Nukhailah with extravagance of outlay and spoke scathingly, as described above, of his two hands outheld, and then took his departure. Someone asked the poet if he would satirize him, but he answered that the other's mocking reference to his buildings would only be followed by another. If this incident is true of Khālid, as perhaps it is,

<sup>1</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam* . . . , II, 330.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>5</sup> *Agh.*, VII, 69.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 139, 140.

<sup>4</sup> *Bayān*, I, 278.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 33.

for he was an adept in the use of *saj'*, the above seven lines of *rajaz* probably refer to Shabīb's promise of his raiment.

The existence of a doublet is found in another narrative. 'Umar b. Hubairah, when governor of Iraq, is stated to have imprisoned al-Farazdaq (*d.* 110 H.), the famous Tamimite poet, a native of Basrah, for satire of himself which wounded his prestige, and to have refused to let anyone intercede for him.<sup>1</sup> But Abū Nukhailah took advantage of the festal occasion of 'Īdu'l-Fiṭr, after the fast of Ramaḍān, to enter into the presence of 'Umar, and in a *rajaz*-poem pleaded his cause, one ground being that an evil-doer of Banū 'Ījl, who had been brought from 'Aynu't-Tamr, had been given his release at the intercession of his kinsfolk, the Banū Bakr b. Wā'il. The story goes on to say that al-Farazdaq was set free, but when informed of the name of his intercessor the notoriously dour old fellow returned to the prison protesting against a man of Banū 'Ījl having been released before him, and that he himself had been put under obligation to a merely putative kinsman of Banū Sa'd. Ibn Hubairah humoured him by declaring that now his freedom was granted for his own sake alone and not at the instance of any intercessor. When 'Umar was deposed in 105 H., 724, and imprisoned—to be murdered soon after when he tried to make his escape, al-Farazdaq eulogized him, and 'Umar exclaimed: 'I have seen none more magnanimous than he; he satirized me while a governor and eulogized me while a prisoner'.

The story however pretty seems to be a garbled version of another. It is true that al-Farazdaq was once cast into prison, but at the instance of Hishām b. 'Abdi'l-Malik for reciting in his presence at Makkah an ode in eulogy of Zaynu'l-'Ābidin, a grandson of 'Alī b. Abi Ṭālib,<sup>2</sup> but another term of incarceration does not appear to be authenticated from any source. Further, the compiler of the *Aghānī* states that he saw the real story in a certain manuscript, and that it concerned Yazid, son of 'Umar b. Hubairah, and two prisoners of the *Shurāt* (i.e. Khawārij) who had been taken at 'Aynu't-Tamr. Yazid b. 'Umar b. Hubairah had been appointed Governor of Iraq by Marwān in 127 H., 745, and in this year fought the Khawārij at Ghazzah, near 'Aynu't-Tamr,<sup>3</sup> and at the latter place in 129 H.<sup>4</sup> 'Aynu't-Tamr was involved in the decisive action between Yazid and Qaṭṭabah, the general of Abū Muslim, near Karbalā' in 132 H., a few months before the final blow to the Umayyad dynasty.<sup>5</sup> Yazid was included in the general amnesty concluded in 132 H. by Abū Ja'far (later called al-Manṣūr) and ratified by as-Saffāh, but was treacherously murdered, and this breach of faith was

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII, 141-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Agh.*, XIV, 75; Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs*, 243.

<sup>3</sup> *Tab.*, II, 1913-4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 1944.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 21.

remembered as a reproach.<sup>1</sup> The incident under reference should probably be set down to 127 or 129 H.

One of the two Khawārij-captives was a member of Bakr b. Wā'il, who interceded successfully for him; Abū Nukhailah interested himself on behalf of the other, a Tamīmīte, and produced a longish poem in which he made an appeal for his release :—

Praise to God, that ruleth over the world— (Rajaz).  
He it is who banishes all rancour !

I present to the generous Imām  
my verse, and loving counsel after.

Thou didst release yesterday a captive of Bakr.  
Could some or many of mine be a ransom to thee,  
on any ground, or plea, or pretext  
would save this Tamīmīte wanting in gratitude  
from the heavy brown rings of the fetters ?  
He has not ceased to be bemused since time of old,  
a man of qualities that wax, of sense that is meet,—  
give him to thy maternal uncles this 'Īd-day.<sup>2</sup>

He used to write eulogies on al-Junaid b. 'Abdī'r Raḥmān al-Murri,<sup>3</sup> a general who extended the Muslim frontier yet further into India in the time of Hishām, and in the same reign was dispatched against the Khāqān. He died of dropsy in 116 H.,<sup>4</sup> but death was made harder for him by his ignominious deposition at the hands of this ruler whom he had served so capably. Abū Nukhailah composed in lamentation for this patron :—

By my life, the mounted party of Junaid is gone, (Ṭawīl).  
to Syria from Murr, and his troops are departed ;  
the Syrian mounted party left behind them  
of Ghatafān a man<sup>5</sup> whose detractor labours in vain,  
one who used to travel at night to the foe as if  
the clamorous sandgrouse were his troops each day,  
and looked as were it the full moon beneath his flag,  
when he moved out in formation, his squadrons with him.

His introduction to as-Saffāh, the first of the Abbasid house, is said to have been in this wise. Realizing that his former attachment to the Umayyads would be prejudicial to him now in approaching their successors, he bided his time till he knew that as-Saffāh had extended his pardon to a greater offence than his own, and then entered and asked permission to recite some verses. But the ruler protested that he had no need of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 211.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>2</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 142.

<sup>4</sup> *Tab.*, II, 1563-5.

<sup>5</sup> Refers to al-Junaid ; Ghatafān was a tribe in the Qays-group.

his poetry, and in any case he would only recite what was left over from the Umayyads, whereupon Abū Nukhailah declaimed<sup>1</sup>:

We are people in fear of kings  
when they ride o'er necks and haunches,<sup>2</sup> (Rajaz).  
we based hope for a time on thy father,  
thereafter, our hope was in thy brother,  
and after him our hope is based on thee ;  
and what I've said to any but thee  
is false, and this atones for that.

As-Saffāh was well satisfied and made him poet to his house.

In expectation of a reward he eulogized al-Muhājir b. 'Abdi'llāh al-Kilābī, who was the Governor of Yamamah and Bahrain in the reign of Hishām<sup>3</sup> and of al-Walid b. Yazīd (r. 125-6 H.),<sup>4</sup> and was a patron of Dhu'r-Rummaḥ and of two so mutually antipathetic poets as Jarīr and al-Farazdaq. Abū Nukhailah and the governor were as closely resembling as the proverbial two peas :—

O habitation of Umm Mālik, safe abide (Rajaz).  
though I be far somewhere, and be at ease !  
What would I do if thou didst not communicate  
a message, or how would it be if thou shouldst yearn ?  
My daughter says to me in tones of reprovers :  
' My father, a day comes thou wilt leave me orphan ' ;  
Then answered I : ' Nay, know this for certain  
that I live till an hour fixed by a written decree.'  
Were I in the darkness of a dark mountain-path,  
or in the sky which I could with a ladder scale,  
I must to the uttermost dree my own weird.  
By the Lord of those camels that amble fast,  
By the Lord of the well of Zamzam, and by Zamzam,  
I will laud on my arrival that goodly one—  
yea, on this my journey from my tenting-place—  
' Ali ibn 'Abdi'llāh, the chief among chiefs,  
for I—and knowing implies close observing—  
was not aware of this Muhājir so bountiful,  
until the decrees of the unjust were scattered ;  
Muhājir, thou possessor of plentiful favour,  
when thou dost produce the best of booty  
thou sharest the gift, with abundance of favours.  
And to Banū Tamīm from thee is best portion,  
when they meet together like thirsty camels ;  
Syria knows and every festal season  
that thou art sweet through sweetness of disposition  
one time, and another thou art like colocynth.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 143 ; cf. *Tab.*, III, 347.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Bei.*, I, 313 ; *inf.*, p. 66.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 934<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> *Bevan*, *Naq.*, 539<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 145-6.

Al-Muhājir ordered for him a she-camel, whereat the poet went off in high dudgeon and exploded in satire :

al-Kilābi the mean, of the missing tooth, (Rajaz).  
gave for my eulogy of him an old she-camel  
whose bones are not set, but its end is near.

This reached the ear of al-Muhājir, who quickly took pains to appease and reward him. But Abū Nakhilah exacted another benefaction on the ground of their resemblance, maintaining that resemblance stood among men for community of pedigree.

Friendly relations prevailed till al-Muhājir's death, when the poet wrote this *marthiyah* :—

Friends, I have no abode in Yamāmah, (Ṭawīl).  
nor is there cooling for my eye after Muhājir ;  
what goodly life I had is passed, so feel sympathy  
for a wayfarer, bent on leaving, a wanderer.  
Though now thou art in the tomb, Ibn Wā'il,  
thou didst adorn conclave and pulpits ;  
and but for thy drawing the sword, resident  
had not slept, nor traveller's path been safe ;  
sore has been on the tribes Qays and Khindif the weeping  
for 'Ali, al-Walid, and likewise Jābir ;  
a moon did sink among them—yea, it seemed  
as sank a full-moon amid the shining stars !<sup>1</sup>

Presumably the story now to be quoted follows the preceding in order of time. He borrowed money from his green-grocer, Mā'izu'l-Kilābi, in Yamamah. When the debt grew large and Abu Nukhailah remained adamant against dunning, the creditor asked the assistance of the Collector. The wily one gave Mā'iz the slip however and went off one night to Mausil, with a three days' start of any action. He taunted the duped tradesman by telling him to fly in quest of him to Harran, or Mausil, or Takrit, and in another poem adds some detail<sup>2</sup> :—

O Mā'iz of the lice, and the mean house where (Rajaz).  
we passed the night,—our mule in the stable ;  
and the demon of rhymes passed the night  
dictating to one most famous of masters ;  
no benefit would be my knowledge or ignorance  
had Mā'iz destroyed my palm-trees ;  
he ceased not roasting me, till my anger boiled,  
until when anger threw me afearing,  
I severed (relations) as severs the sharp sword-blade.

He had a sister married to someone called Mayyāt. Abū Nukhailah managed her property till a day came when she objected that he was appropriating the proceeds to his own benefit. His reply, in *rajaz*, is self-laudatory, and concludes

<sup>1</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 146.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

with two lines which are shamelessly coarse and of the order of retort by abuse.<sup>1</sup>

He married a woman of his own people. The birth of a daughter vexed him so that he divorced his wife. Later he regretted this step and took her back. When in his house one day he heard unexpectedly the voice of his daughter, while her mother was playing with her, and he softened towards the child, and went to her and began dandling her and saying:—

Daughter of one who loved not a daughter, (Rajaz).  
 thou wert not more than five [days] or six  
 ere love perished in me, and I from grief  
 was bruised so in heart, it broke ;  
 thou art forsooth better than a boy  
 gets drunk at morn, is drowsy by even.<sup>2</sup>

His devotion to his little son 'Alī, according to an account by the latter, was a source of annoyance to his wife, Umm Hammād al-Hanafīyah, who complained that it made him neglectful of the children and the household. Her anger grew in vehemence, till one day he spoke flattering words that turned away her wrath:—

And there is no friend like Umm Hammād, (Wāfir).  
 when the matter is too grave for speech ;  
 gracious I see her, and my eye is cooled,  
 and her wheedling substitutes my scolding her.<sup>3</sup>

Another incident of a personal nature is related by this son 'Alī. Once on his father's return from Makkah he accompanied him on a visit to some property which he owned, and which had not been well cared for in his absence by the person in charge. As he stood watching the watering his senses were stimulated and he was moved to expression <sup>4</sup>:—

The crackling of fibres of the palm-leaves resembled (Tawīl).  
 the sound of saddles of *mays*-wood on strong camels,  
 and the palms are laden so heavy with foliage  
 they look bent like an old man of the 'Ajāmis.  
 And the trunk whose dry veins thou waterest  
 with water neglects not to benefit the branches.

On one occasion he entered to as-Saffāh when Ishāq b. Muslim al-'Uqāilī was also present. Ishāq had proved his loyalty to the Umayyads; on behalf of Hishām he had raided and taken in 120 H. the strongholds of Tūmānshāh and ravaged his territory<sup>5</sup>; in 126 H. Marwān b. Muḥammad sent him to the defence of the Caucasian frontier against the Turkomans, when he himself set out to assert against Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd his claim to the throne at Damascus; he was then head of the

<sup>1</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 146.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 144-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>5</sup> *Tab.*, II, 1635.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.



tribe Qays<sup>1</sup>; in 128 H. he was in charge of the left division of Marwān II's army against aḍ-Ḍaḥḥak, the rival Khalifah set up by the Khawārij, who was killed at that time in the battle at Kafartūthā<sup>2</sup>; in 133 H. a large army of Syrians besieged Harran, and as-Saffāḥ dispatched his brother Abū Ja'far to engage with them, who with some difficulty defeated them; but Ishāq held Sumaisāt for seven months against Abū Ja'far, and the siege was only raised after peace-negotiations initiated by Ishāq had been ratified by as-Saffāḥ. Ishāq held faithfully by his Umayyad patrons till he knew for certain that the curtain had rung down finally on the last scene of their drama.<sup>3</sup> Apparently as-Saffāḥ had learned to esteem him, for he attached him to himself and retained him as an intimate friend; in 145 H. he was still in possession of his royal patron's confidence.<sup>4</sup>

Abū Nukhailah recited to them a long panegyric on al-Manṣūr in which he stated:—

till when the executors gathered troops (Rajaz).  
and a gem arose from the pure gold of the Prophet  
and from the Banu'l-'Abbās a small *nab'*-tree,<sup>5</sup>  
whose growth good origin and descent promoted,

and spoke of the conflict which determined the fate of the Umayyads:

there remained not of Marwān an eye to see,<sup>5</sup>  
neither distant one, nor people present;

and the selection of Anbār for a capital, in contradistinction to the desolation that befell the cities of Hims, Tadmor and Wasit.<sup>6</sup> Ishāq's resentment, for no explicit reason, was stirred at the references to the Marwanids and he declared that he had heard him utter in the audience-rooms of the Umayyad Banū Marwān still more objectionable things about the Abbasids, and denounced him as lacking in loyalty, fidelity and nobility. as-Saffāḥ's face now showed displeasure and he left the poet unrewarded.

The record of his years between the time of as-Saffāḥ and 147 H., 764, when al-Mahdi became heir-apparent, seems to fail entirely, certainly as regards his appearance at court; in the latter year, and apparently not before for he was a stranger then to al-Manṣūr, he came to the court. The date of his advent is certain, but not its manner.

Through his poetry he probably formed acquaintance with al-Qa'qā' b. Dirār,<sup>7</sup> who had been appointed to command of

<sup>1</sup> Tab., II, 1871-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1939; Yāqūt, IV, 287; Well. tr., 392.

<sup>3</sup> Tab., III, 57-8.

<sup>5</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 149-150.

<sup>7</sup> See *inf.*, p. 66.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

<sup>6</sup> Tab., II, 1893.



the *Shurīah* (gendarmerie) in Kufah by 'Īsā b. Mūsā and held the post from at any rate 141 H. till 147 H.<sup>1</sup> In some year during this period there came drought and dearth. Abū Nukhailah, by this time well-advanced in years, with his two sons and two servants, made his way to al-Qa'qā' and eulogized him, and in return was housed and fed, and acknowledged the hospitality thus :—

There ceased not among us four bowls for two months (*Rajaz*).  
like camels driven off, and again returning—  
my two servants, and two sons, and an old man  
who stooped as stands the laden camel up.<sup>2</sup>

Then indigestion supervened, on account, as he alleged before his host, of the richness of the food and the want of wine :—

Day-shade and night-shelter both do know (*Rajaz*).  
that with al-Qa'qā' I'm all I could desire ;  
when the table arrives I am given  
dainties by which I am not nourished ;  
I have power, am asked to intercede and guard  
as were I one appointed to hold office ;  
and were I to desire what I might be given,  
I would not increase aught more than I get.  
Son of a house of which other houses fall short,  
stop, for I am entertained beyond hospitality ;  
date-juice can not commended be above my wine,  
nor water sweet and colder grown overnight ;  
but I am made appear among the people,  
a *raṭl* of dilute date-wine I'm given to drink ;  
stiff, when I've drunk it, I'm asked to recite.

There are three forms of the narrative connected with his appearance at the court of al-Manṣūr, at al-Hāshimīyyah apparently.

(a) A story is told of Sulaimān b. 'Abdī'llāh, the *Rāwī*, that once when he was on his way to al-Manṣūr, who by that time was minded to replace 'Īsā b. Mūsā as heir-apparent by al-Mahdī, he met between Hīrah and Kufah our poet, with his two sons and a servant, who were carrying his store ; presumably the whole party was en route for the court also. Sulaimān learned from him that he had been staying with al-Qa'qā' b. Ma'bad,<sup>3</sup> and had there composed poetry connected with al-Manṣūr's resolve regarding the apparency, and his host had thereupon asked him to transfer himself elsewhere lest it should precipitate the displeasure of 'Īsā, whose protégée he was. Sulaimān then arranged for his hospitality and informed al-Manṣūr about the poem, and when the day arrived for taking

<sup>1</sup> Tab., III, 131, 347.

<sup>2</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 149.

<sup>3</sup> He is al-Qa'qā' b. Dīrār b. Ma'bad ; see *sup.*, p. 65.

the oath to al-Mahdī (147 H.) he went to al-Manṣūr along with Abū Nukhailah, who there recited his *urjūzah* in *dāl*, in presence of those assembled, and was duly rewarded. The narrative is practically the same in both at-Ṭabari and the *Aghānī*.<sup>1</sup>

(b) Abū Nukhailah is recorded to have stated that he came to al-Manṣūr and tarried at his gate seeking admission. One day 'Abdu'llāh b. ar-Rabī' al-Hārithī, who in 146 H. had been removed from the governorship of Madinah and was now at court, suggested to him that a time like this, when al-Manṣūr had in mind the replacement of 'Isā by al-Mahdī, would be a favourable one in which to stimulate him to such action and remunerative; he thereupon composed the poem that follows. The narrative in both cases is again practically the same; the poetical passages however differ in content and phrasing:—

What is it spite of distance is come to thee, (Rajaz).  
or what at whose memory thy tears flow,  
for thou hast wept—what made thee weep? <sup>2</sup>

The lines are stated in the *Aghānī* to occur in an *urjūzah*; it is quoted at greater length by at-Ṭabari; the *rajaz* lines at p. 61 *sup.*<sup>3</sup> also belong here. As given by at-Ṭabari the poem is:—

Lo thou, 'Abdu'llāh,<sup>4</sup> art worthy thereof,  
the *khilāfat* of God which He gave thee;  
He singled thee, singled thee out with this;  
and we have seen for a time thy father,  
and now we see thee in possession of it,  
and we are of such and our love is for thee,  
yea, and we sue for protection unto thee.  
Stay thy support on Muḥammad,<sup>5</sup> for thy son  
will suffice wherein thou dost charge him,  
and its best guard is thy nearest one.  
And I have sped with foot and haunches,  
and have woven till I find nought to weave,  
and coursed around in this, that, and yon,  
but all I've composed save concerning thee  
is false, and this discredits all other.

According to the *Aghānī* he recited the poem to al-Manṣūr, who rewarded him and warned him of possible vindictive machinations on the part of 'Isā.<sup>6</sup>

(c) He composed also his well-known *urjūzah* in *dāl*,<sup>7</sup> whose contents and text differ greatly in at-Ṭabari and the *Aghānī*; according to the latter the passage on p. 57 *sup.* should be prefixed to the following, which is reproduced from at-Ṭabari:—

<sup>1</sup> Tab., III, 348; *Agh.*, XVIII, 150.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 143; cf. Tab., III, 347.

<sup>5</sup> I.e. al-Mahdī.

<sup>7</sup> Tab., III, 347; *Agh.*, XVIII, 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 152.

<sup>4</sup> I.e. al-Manṣūr.

<sup>6</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 152.

Unto the Chief of the Believing betake thee,  
 take thy way to the foaming sea of seas,  
 thou art he, O son of the namesake of Aḥmad,<sup>1</sup>  
 and scion of the lofty house of the Arabs,  
 nay more, O trusted of the Only One, the Eternal,  
 he to whom the Lord of the Mosque gave charge !  
 Yestreen its heir-apparent with happy omen  
 was 'Īsā, then he made it over to Muḥammad<sup>2</sup> ;  
 before 'Īsā it passed from one familiar place to another,  
 so it was being delivered from hand to hand  
 among you, and is staying on and waxing in power ;  
 and we are content with this beardless youth.  
 Nay, we had left off but we have borne no witness,  
 and the pact has not yet been ratified ;  
 and did we hear cries raised ; ' Come to our help ! '  
 we would hasten as with the tread of thirsty herd ;  
 so speed with the oath of allegiance to the massed host,  
 who will depart this self-same day or at morn ;  
 he is full-grown, and none are withholding ;  
 he will increase what thou wilt,—increase him, he will  
 increase ;  
 and enrobe him from thee with a robe he will don,  
 the robe of the surpassing and garlanded ;  
 it may be told of them they seem to have gone back—  
 but had they done so, yet would they not refuse,  
 though they'd been travelling some time through desert on  
 desert  
 and the time had arrived for their going to water ;  
 for the removal of the erring and corrupt is due ;  
 God said to them : ' Come and be rightly guided ',  
 and they have alighted in the covenant-place,  
 and their quick nature is the best of all.  
 He never attacked the meanness of envious souls  
 with a chieftain so strong, mightily enforced.  
 When they go to strike fire with unyielding fire-stick,  
 they will be tried by one of established power, and firm,  
 who increases in caution against threat.  
 With alternate leniency and anger  
 hold a stout sword, which will eat through any file !

Abū Nukhailah is reported to have stated that this *rajaz*-poem in *dāl* was recited publicly and was carried on the lips of the masses and the classes,<sup>3</sup> till at length it reached al-Manṣūr, who admired it and enquired about the composer and sent for him, and had him read it through ; 'Īsā was present seated at al-Manṣūr's right hand, and heard it. When the poet came

<sup>1</sup> I.e. the Prophet.

<sup>3</sup> Tab., III, 350 ; *Agh.*, XVIII, 151.

<sup>2</sup> I.e. al-Mahdī.

out, 'Aqqāl b. Shabbah approached and tapped him on the shoulder and said : If the matter goes through to its conclusion, you will be fortunate ; but if not, then seek a burrow underground, or a ladder to scale the sky. Whereupon the poet is stated to have remarked :—

It hangs in its hanging-place, and the locusts creak.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult, if not impossible, to decide as to the historical course of events, but there is perhaps a better *prima facie* case for (b) ; (c) may have been composed very soon after.

Abū Nukhailah's lucky star might now have been thought to be in the ascendant, but it is related that al-Manṣūr himself warned him of the danger he stood in from 'Īsā, who did seek and take early revenge on this the humbler agent of the mischief done him. The poet fled towards Khurasan, but 'Īsā sent a *maulā*, al-Qaṭārī, in pursuit of him, who overtook him on the way thither, and killed him and flayed his face, and cast his body to the vultures.<sup>2</sup> In aṭ-Tabarī one account adds the little piece of detail that al-Manṣūr wrote to Rayy about the reward for him, and that Abū Nukhailah received it there, and as he carried it on his way thence was killed.<sup>3</sup>

Satire was an arrow in his quiver ; Abu'l-Abrash praised God that Abū Nukhailah, whose aim was more accurate than his own and had wounded him, was now unable to harass him further.<sup>4</sup> He could, and frequently did, make effective use of this weapon, but as a rule he moved with life's surface-currents, and was not stirred deep within.

His wit was ready, but in alignment with the far from delicate expressiveness his age indulged in. The salacious jest above-stairs and below has a perpetual vogue, secured for it probably as much by the confidential nature of its communication as by its wit, and Abū Nukhailah did not always render obeisance to the proprieties.<sup>5</sup>

He maintained a prominent position as a poet over many years until his death ; for this he owed little or nothing to birth ; something to his early experience among the tribes ; and much to his success with panegyrics, which demands a considerable measure of the graceful art of flattery. He made use of several verse-forms, but *rajaz* was pre-eminently his favourite, and certainly his happiest, medium of expression. This simplest of metrical forms is ancient, but the poem utilizing it only came into vogue in this post-classical period. Mere persistence may only be sign of conservatism and witness to the slowness of death in survivals. But it is necessary to account for the efflorescence

<sup>1</sup> A proverbial expression signifying that it was now too late for action ; Bei., I, 315 ; Agh., XVIII, 151 ; Lane's *Lex.*, s.v. '*aliga* and *jundub*.'

<sup>2</sup> Agh., XVIII, 152.

<sup>3</sup> Tab., III, 350.

<sup>4</sup> Agh., XVIII, 152.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 143, 147, 148.

of poetry in this verse-form during a large portion of these two dynastic periods. It is rough-hewn ; the force of words has more attention than their setting ; and realism, not impressionism, is their characteristic.

We should probably seek for the explanation of this efflorescence of a primitive form in the temper of the age, or rather in its distemper. The old note of bravado (*hamāsah*) and brag (*fakhr*) is less and less heard in the land, nor is there the same unstudied tone in the elegy (*marthiyah*). The composure of the desert that was punctuated at intervals by enterprises that stirred the blood, such as the raid, blood-feud, and the vendetta, and the clandestine amour, is now disturbed over long intervals by prosaic dialectic of the intellect ; romance is a memory, not an experience. Conditions have so changed too that the monarch's pleasure and not public opinion is the touchstone for the time of the poet's merit. There was still in Iraq universal argument ; political restlessness, due in great measure to the aggressiveness of tribal nature ; human life itself had still too much martial value and was not allowed much consolidating influence ; it was an age neither of one dominant authority nor of an amalgamating national emergency ; there was uncertainty and unrest ; the spirit of man stood without idealism timidly before conditions unfavourable to creative art ; consequently we find no great poetry in this period of mental agitation.

---

Abu's-Simţ Marwān b. Abi Ḥafṣah—A Post-classical Arab Poet.

By A. H. HARLEY.

In the pagan times of the Arabs, i.e. before the advent of the Prophet, oral records were pretty faithfully preserved in the memories of the tribesmen, especially by the *nassābs* (genealogists ; sennachies) among them. But the coming of Islam marks an era of change, and its conquests necessarily so. For half-a-century from this time tribal Arabia's comparative isolation of long centuries was violated, and her two ancient cities of Makkah and Madinah held a dominant position, till the territorial and riverine zone from Damascus to the Persian Gulf became the axis round which the wide Muslim world revolved. Far-flung frontiers and busy communications extended interests beyond the former confines of the peninsula proper, and complexity entered into social relationships.

The spoil of Islam's foreign conquests included large numbers of captives, and as many of these became incorporated in one manner or another into the population the former domestic conditions could not remain in their integrity. From out such stock went forth poets, singers, instrumentalists ; when they achieved fame their lineage was to seek, and it was not always certain. There is some dubiety about this Abu's-Simţ (or Abu'l Hindām)<sup>1</sup> Marwān's forbears. It is stated that Abū Ḥafṣah was the *kunyah*, or to-name, of his great-grandfather Yazīd<sup>2</sup> ; Ibn Khallikān attaches it also as such to Marwan's father Sulaimān. Yazīd is stated to have been a Jew, or a Jewish physician, who professed Islam to 'Uthman b. 'Affān, or to Marwān b. al-Ḥakam. A remoter Jewish connection has been attributed to him by the people of Madinah, who declared him to be a *mawlā*, or slave, of as-Samau'al b. 'Ādiyāh, a Jew of Taimā', near to Madinah, who is proverbial among the Arabs because of his fidelity to the royal fugitive poet Imru'u'l-Qays.<sup>3</sup>

His family however claimed for him another connection, and asserted that he had been taken captive at Iṣṭakhr, in Persia, probably therefore about 22 H., 643, or early in the *khilāfat* of 'Uthman b. 'Affān (r. 23-35 H.), and that 'Uthman purchased him as a slave and presented him to his staunch supporter

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* . . . , II, 117 (ed. Bulaq, 1299 H.), and tr. de Slane, III, 342.

<sup>2</sup> *K. al-Aghānī* ; IX, 34 (ed. Egypt, 1323 H.).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.



Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, to whom he closely attached himself, and by whose side he fought on *Yaumu'd-Dār* (the Day of the House), viz. the house of the Khalifah 'Uthmān, in which he was besieged for about two months by malcontent subjects, and there assassinated. When his master Marwān was wounded on that occasion, Abū Ḥafṣah carried him beyond reach of danger to the house of a woman of Banū 'Anazah, and there tended him till he recovered. As a token of gratitude his master granted him his liberty, and made over to him a woman who had borne to himself a daughter, Ḥafṣah by name; hence the *kunyah* Abū Ḥafṣah, which would not indicate in these circumstances blood-relationship.<sup>1</sup>

He stood side by side with him later in the engagement known as the Battle of the Camel, 36 H., 656, when 'Alī b. Abī Tālib triumphed over the supporters of his formidable opponents az-Zubair and Ṭalḥah, who both perished at that time, and 'Ā'ishah, a widow of the Prophet, who effected her escape; and also at Marj Rāhit, 64 H., 684, where ad-Daḥḥāk, fighting for 'Abdu'llāh b. az-Zubair against the new ruler at Damascus, Marwān b. Al-Ḥakam, lost his life.<sup>2</sup>

There is also a tradition of his having been sold, or having sold himself, into servitude because of hard times.<sup>2</sup> This much at least seems sure concerning him that he was associated in some way with Marwān b. al-Ḥakam.

He is credited on good authority with the gift of poetical expression; these lines connected with the *Yaumu'd-Dār* are attributed to him:

I said not that *Day of the House* to my folk : [Ṭawīl.]  
 'Make peace', nor preferred life to being slain;  
 but I said to them: 'Contend with your swords,  
 which are falling short of the foe's full-grown.

And these also, but in a different connection or setting:

I am not one to block the way when there is [Rajaz.]  
 crowding;  
 on those who drink at the reservoirs of mischief  
 I keep repeating attack upon attack.<sup>2</sup>

The tone is that of *ḥamāsah* (bravery, bravado) characteristic of the pre-Islamic period known as the *Jāhiliyyah*.

His son Yahyā enjoyed a reputation for a generosity typical of exemplary tribal hospitality. The poet Jarir, ever memorable for his long and severe crossing of swords in verse with al-Farazdaq and al-Akḥṭal, addressed to his own son Bilāl words of old-time courtesy regarding the liberality of Yahyā's nature:

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.



Wouldst have provision and comrade other [Ṭawīl.]  
than Yahyā ?

Forsooth excellent provision is Yahyā for the  
traveller,  
and the strong-cheeked camel is not safe from  
his sword's blow,  
when they have consumed their stores or little  
is in the sacks.<sup>1</sup>

‘Abdu’l-Malik b. Marwān (r. 65–86 H., 685–705) apparently valued his services very highly, and esteemed marriage with him as honourable as with his own son Sulaimān. Yahyā paid due homage to his successor in the royal chair, al-Walid, and congratulated him on his accession, and extended sympathy to him in his bereavement :

Fate leaves no single one behind [Kāmil.]  
that carrieth weapons or shield ;  
if a creature could escape fate,  
the Khalifah had escaped it ;  
pulpits mourned the day he died—yea,  
they mourned the loss of their able one.  
When Walid succeeding mounted them  
they said : ‘ Son and Equal ! ’, and were quiet ;  
had some other laid hand on them,  
they had spurned and cast him from them.<sup>1</sup>

The circumstances are all changed, but the voice resembles that of our poet Marwān when he congratulates Mūsā al-Hādī on his accession and laments al-Mahdī :

In every town the graves are feeling proud [Ṭawīl.]  
of the grave of the Chief of the Believing ;  
were they not in quiet with his son in his stead,  
the pulpits would not cease mourning him.<sup>2</sup>

According to one tradition he sued for wives for his sons unto a grandson of the famous Qays b. ‘Āsim, al-Minqarī, who had been a chief of Banū Sa’d in his day. He pled his cause successfully, but al-Qalāh b. Hazn, al-Minqarī, felt his gorge rise at a union with a family so spurious in origin and protested in sarcastic lines. Yahyā replied in verses replete with a righteous man’s indignant scorn :—

Yea, God hath shamed al-Qalāh, and his women [Ṭawīl.]  
by the well—at their ill-smell dogs grow thirsty ;  
we married the daughters of the chief Qays b.  
‘Āsim—  
and purposely turned from those of Banū Hazn—  
a father better than thy father in origin,  
a more auspicious medium and of higher worth.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-7.

The snubbed of one generation may produce a snob in the next—such is the irony in circumstances, and a fact concomitant with growth and survival. Once union with Yaḥyā b. Abi Ḥafṣah's line was scorned; now the *'irmān* or upper part of the nose of his grandson Marwān was big with pride of birth; when in Madinah on one occasion he received a letter with the news that a woman of his household had married into a family, the Banū Maṭar, relationship with whom he did not approve, and he thereupon indited the following to her brother:

Hadst thou been like Yaḥyā with his womenfolk, [*Basīṭ.*]  
 thou hadst not chosen a stallion with Maṭar for  
 sire;  
 fine pedigree steeds thou hadst to manage for—  
 but didst ruin them—with white legs and head-  
 blaze.  
 I'm told Khawlah said the day he wed her:  
 Long I've expected this shame from you!<sup>1</sup>

But the facts here are at variance with those given by Ibn Qutaibah, according to whom Yaḥyā married Khawlah, and the last two *bayts* above are the utterance of al-Qalāḥ, and not of Marwān, Yaḥyā's grandson.<sup>2</sup>

His loyalty to the Umayyads endured apparently to the end of his life; when Yazid b. al-Muhallab rebelled against Yazid II, Marwān regretted that al-Ḥajjāj, the efficient administrator of the Two Iraqs on behalf of the Umayyads, who on account of his resoluteness however has won undying obloquy, was no longer alive to take the field against him.<sup>3</sup>

He deplores the fact that a certain governor of Yamamah, Sufyān b. 'Amr, had rejected his advice:

Ibn 'Amr spurned me when I gave him counsel— [*Basīṭ.*]  
 and had I prevailed, his foot had not slipped  
 with him;  
 had I blown on charcoal, my fire had blazed,  
 but the ashes of his state had powdered.<sup>4</sup>

There is obvious here much force of expression, and the concrete is not yet imaged in tropes.

Of his son Sulaimān there was evidently nothing for the scribe of achievements in peace or war to record. Ibn Khallikān has given him the *kunyah* of Abū Ḥafṣah,<sup>5</sup> and so its association with Marwān becomes at once explicable.

According to this same authority our poet was born in 150 H., 723-4, and died in 181 or 182 H.,<sup>6</sup> 797 or 798, at Baghdad;

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>2</sup> *K. ash-Shi'r* . . . , 178 (ed. Eg., 1332 H.).

<sup>3</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 37.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>5</sup> *O.C.*, II, 117.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Yāfi'i, *Mir'āt* . . . , I, 389 (ed. Hyderabad): cf. *infra*, p. 86.

he is also herein stated to have been a native of Yamamah, the long-important Central Arabian province, which at this time was administered from Madinah. A family-connection with it apparently existed or was formed as early as the time of Mu'āwiyah's reign (r. 40–60 H., 661–680), for Marwān b. al-Hakam, his Governor at Madinah, sent his henchman Abū Hafṣah there to collect her revenues, and incidentally the latter entered into matrimony with a woman of that region.<sup>1</sup> Its important town of Hajr is mentioned several times in connection with the family, and all Marwān's outgoings appear to have been from Yamamah.

The author of the *Aghānī* states that he has quoted verses by Yahyā at some length or with some variety on the psychological ground that the poetical antecedents of Marwān might be made known. Ibn Khallikān has been at some pains to establish Marwān's poetic faculty as an hereditary gift. On the authority of a grandson, Marwān b. Abi'l-Junūb, known as Marwān *al-Aṣghar* to distinguish him from our poet, Marwān *al-Akbar*, it is stated that Abū Hafṣah's son Yahyā had for mother Laḥnā', daughter of Maimūn, one of the children of an-Nābighah, al-Ja'dī, a well-known poet born in the pagan age, who survived into the time of the Prophet and professed Islam. Through her this poetic strain entered the family<sup>1</sup>; rather, as has been shown, it combined with one of considerable quality already there. al-Mubarrad (*d.* 285–6 H., 899), the famous philologist of the Basrah-School of grammarians and author of the important literary history *al-Kāmil*, in the manner characteristic of these Arabian natural statisticians of rating and grading, placed this second among families having this hereditary talent.<sup>2</sup> A remark by 'Abdu'llāh, son of the al-Mu'tazz who reigned at the then Abbasid capital of Sāmarrā from 251–5 H., 865–9, supplies an unintended comment on this lineal communication of a talent. According to him the vein of poetry became exhausted in the fourth generation after Marwān. The prince 'Abdu'llāh recited a very poor poem by this great-grandson Mutawwaj, and likened the family's poetic talent to some water in a cauldron, which from being hot in the time of Marwān cooled with each generation till it chilled and froze.<sup>3</sup>

Marwān probably first obtained admission to the Umayyad court under the ægis of his paternal uncles; during an interview with al-Manṣūr much later he speaks of having been there with them in the reign of al-Walid b. Yazid (r. 125–5 H., 743–4), whom he describes as prepossessing and gifted, and some verses of whose composition he quotes.<sup>4</sup> His talent in panegyric maintained him in favour at the Abbasid court, where he celebrated the praises of al-Manṣūr, al-Mahdī, al-Hādī and

<sup>1</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 35.

<sup>2</sup> I. Khall., II, 119.

<sup>3</sup> *Aṣ-Ṣūlī, Kitābu'l-Awrāq, Ash'ar Awlād* . . . 117 (ed. J. H. Dunne).

<sup>4</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 39.

Hārūnu'r-Rashīd, and last, but not least, of the great house of the Barmakids. But first he had to live down memory of his praises of the Umayyads, or atone for this attachment. The credentials he presented at the Abbasid court were his panegyrics enlivened with satirical strictures on the Alids.

But a more personal, and indeed a quite romantic, attachment sprang up between him and Ma'n b. Zā'idah, a one-time refugee from Abbasid vengeance who yet lived to become a profitable servant to them as a provincial governor. Ma'n enjoys a reputation for generosity<sup>1</sup> and probity of character; firmness also had a large place when necessary in his dealings with men. In a crowded gathering Marwān once said of him:—

I see the heart which yestreen loved prattling [Ṭawīl.]  
women,

though long it had enjoyed the period of youth—<sup>2</sup>

.....

The foe withheld, not for safety from thee,  
but that they saw nothing to want in thee<sup>3</sup>;  
they saw one in his lair whom they'd tried, and  
marked, nearby

his covert, place where some of them had been  
downed and dragged<sup>2</sup>;

and he has no match when it distresses him  
to see

towards his throat shining spears directed<sup>2</sup>;

two palms he has, with boon and bane,

for God refused they should but harm or aid.<sup>3</sup>

He had been a trusted officer of the Umayyads, and was officially attached to Yazīd b. 'Umar b. Hubairah, then Governor of the Two Iraqs. After the Abbasids came to power, al-Manṣūr, or Abū Ja'far as he then was, besieged Yazīd in Wasīṭ in 132 H. Ma'n displayed great bravery in support of his superior, and when the latter was put to death, he found it expedient to go into hiding for a price had been put on his head and diligent search was being made for him.<sup>4</sup> He grew weather-beaten and altered in countenance from exposure to the sun. He stayed in concealment till the affray at al-Hashimiyyah, the town built by as-Saffāh and completed in 134 H., 752, near Kufah; on this occasion a band of religious zealots known as Rawandiyyah, from Khurasan, becoming exasperated with al-Manṣūr's refusal of divine honours, attacked him and his supporters.<sup>5</sup> Ma'n issued forth in disguise by night from his hiding-place in the neighbourhood, and displayed great courage in the loyalist

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 41, 44.

<sup>2</sup> A. F. Rifā'i, *ʿAṣru'l-Ma'mūn*, II, 294 (Cairo, 1346, 1927).

<sup>3</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 44.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>5</sup> I. Athīr: *al-Kāmil*, V, 383 (ed. Tornberg).

cause, which drew on him the notice of al-Manṣūr and he rewarded him with the governorship of the Yaman, specially charging him to break the alliance between the tribe Rabi'ah and the Yamanis.<sup>1</sup> Jealousy, like circumstances, makes strange bed-fellows; Rabi'ah and Tamīm both belonged to the tribal Arabs of the north of the Peninsula and were of common descent, but in the social crucible in Iraq tribalism was being dissolved; its former survival-value was being reduced; ephemeral political values were elaborating new combinations. Rabi'ah in their struggle for power had made alliance with the Yamanis.<sup>2</sup> Ma'n carried out his commission, proceeding beyond the verge of moderation.<sup>1</sup>

Details are wanting as to the circumstances in which Marwân came first into contact with Ma'n; he is said to have stated that he went to interview him and recited to him his *qaṣidah*, or ode, in final rhyming-letter 'l', which immediately won for him a large reward. The eulogistic part of the poem contains these lines:—

Maṭar's folk on battle-day are like [Tarwīl.]  
 lions with cubs in the vale of Khaffān;  
 they guard their client—one might think  
 him housed secure among the stars;  
 noble men, they hold the lead in Islam,  
 and none had chief like theirs in pagan time;  
 a folk, if they say, they fulfil; called,  
 they respond; they give most handsomely;  
 great men of action cannot achieve their deeds,  
 though they behave finely in straits.<sup>3</sup>

It is possible however that he first approached him with a different poem, containing the line:—

Ma'n son of Zā'idah, through whom are increased [Kāmīl.]  
 Banū Shaibān from glory unto glory.

Ma'n in return 'filled his hands, and Marwân stayed with him till he grew rich and his circumstances became ample; and Ma'n was the first who brought him to fame and extolled him'.<sup>4</sup> Thereafter the poet wrote eulogies on him, and fine elegies when Nature claimed the mortal frame. Unfortunately this account comes from a source which informs us that the poem as it stands is an adaptation; Marwân is said to have passed by a man of Banū Bāhilah, in Yamamah, and heard him reciting to an audience a poem he had composed for Marwân (II) b. Muḥammad, who had perished before it could be read to him; it began:—

Marwân son of Muḥammad, thou art he [Kāmīl.]  
 by whom Banū Marwân are increased in glory.

<sup>1</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 41.

<sup>2</sup> Muir, *The Caliphate* . . . , 417, 440.

<sup>3</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 43.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

He awaited an opportunity to find him alone, and then made him an offer for it and bought it from him, imposing on him the while a strict oath not to recite or claim it. The allegation may be true, but our poet had no need to draw at another's spring.

On his return, or perhaps on a return-visit, from the Yaman Ma'n received a popular welcome and ovation, which included a *qaṣidah* by Marwān. The official in due course called on al-Manṣūr, who enquired with displeasure why he had rewarded the composer so handsomely for his poem containing the *bayt* :—

Ma'n son of Zā'idah, through whom are increased [Kāmil.]  
 Banū Shaibān from glory unto glory ;  
 if days of deeds are counted, then are his days two—  
 one of generosity and one of spearing.

He replied that the reward had not been for this composition, but another dealing with the day of al-Hashimiyyah :—

Thou ceased not the day of Hāshimiyyah to [Kāmil.]  
 display  
 thy sword in defence of the Khalifah of God ;  
 thou didst protect his realm, and wert his  
 defence  
 from blow of every Indian blade and spear.

al-Manṣūr blushed for his misgiving, but was not relieved in mind regarding the amount of the reward, whereon Ma'n exclaimed : But for fear of your thinking badly of it, I would put in his power the keys of the treasures and make him free of them ! The less exuberant monarch observed with restraint : What a rare Arab of the desert ! How light to you is what bears heavily on other men and resolute persons !<sup>1</sup>

Ma'n was transferred from the Yaman as Governor of Adharbaijan, and thence to Sijistan. In the latter province he was assassinated, in a year variously given as 151, 152, and 158 H., by some Kharijite sectarians. His death was widely mourned, and was evidently felt by Marwān as a personal loss, and not merely the removal of a beneficent patron. By no means the least among the trials of a Poet Laureate—not that Marwān was such, but only one of the poets most in prominence—is the popular expectation that he will produce verses to order on occasion. A similar sense of inevitability or convention exhausting the wings of poetic fancy's flight must pervade the panegyrist. Only personal relations with the subject, involving understanding and appreciation, can add piquancy to eulogy, poignancy to elegy. There can be nothing so jejune as the impersonal panegyric, full of platitudes ; it is a voice without timbre or resonance.

Ibn Khallikān informs us that the poets composed some fine elegies to the memory of this Maecenas of letters, and states that

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.



the following by Marwān ranks among the noblest and most beautiful poetry :—

Ma'n has passed on his way, and left behind a [Wāfir.]  
name

for good traits will never perish or be acquired ;  
it seemed the day Ma'n was stricken as had  
the sun's majesty been cloked with gloom.

.....  
Night seemed after Ma'n as if united  
unto nights joined to it, so long it was !  
Alas, my father, for thee such time as gifts  
are made delusive hopes, and with excuses !  
Alas, my father, for thee when orphans come  
with matted hair, as had they a disease !  
Alas, my father, for thee what time verses,  
through loss of him praised in them, go amiss !  
Alas, my father, for every tumult of war  
because of which bearing women cast their child !  
We stay on in Yamamah since we despair,  
without any intention to leave it.<sup>1</sup>

Some time after the sad event just mentioned Marwān entered with a number of poets, when the day came round for al-Mahdi's custom to be observed of allowing them one day's audition in the year, to this monarch and recited a panegyric on him. When the subject had enquired about and learned the name of the composer, jealousy apparently awoke in his breast, for he asked : Was it not you who said :

We stay on in Yamamah after Ma'n,  
without intention to leave it,<sup>2</sup>  
and we say : Whither travel after Ma'n,  
seeing gifts are ceased, and there is none to give ?

Interpreting this last *bayt* literally he refused to consider a reward, and even bade him be ignominiously removed. When the next occasion of the annual audition came round, Marwān adroitly secured admission, and in his due order recited this *qaṣidah*, whose *nasīb* opens with a pretty conceit :—

One came to visit thee by night—hail to her [Kāmil.]  
vision !—  
a fair one who blends coquetry with her  
beauty ;  
she led thy heart and it submitted, and her  
like  
leads hearts to loving and inclines them ;

<sup>1</sup> O.C., II, 145-6.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. I. Khalil, II, 146.



it seemed as she came with fragrance of a  
 garden<sup>1</sup>  
 wherein the rains of Spring had poured their  
 showers ;  
 she passed the night asking in my dream, at  
 the stop  
 in the desert, of one unkempt, unbored by her  
 quest ;  
 amid men who lay asleep unheeding, being  
 weary of the sharp night-march and its tedium,  
 and the padding of whose clothes felt like  
 Indian blades  
 worn thin, which the smiths had neglected to  
 polish ;  
 they placed their cheeks by worn camels  
 leaning sideways,  
 complaining of wounds on their sides and  
 fatigue ;  
 they sought the Chief of the Believing, and  
 continued  
 from morning till eve despite night-travelling ;  
 they yearned unto thee, thirsting, and sped  
 with haste  
 traversing the desert's rugged grounds and  
 sands ;  
 following a fleet camel, whose briskness was  
 shaking,  
 though now lean-worn, her neck and the back  
 of her head ;  
 swift, now enveloped amid the hills, now  
 cleaving them  
 as cleaves restive beast, when affeared, their  
 rugged heights ;  
 hastening when the whip urges, as hastens  
 bi-coloured ostrich, racing her young, because  
 of the dark ;  
 thin as a bow she comes to thee, but other  
 times  
 appears like a tower, filling her saddle and  
 ropes.<sup>2</sup>

This exordium consisting of a short *nasīb*, or love-passage, and a description of the trying conditions of his journey is true to the classical model of the *qaṣīdah* ; it merges into an apostrophe to the source of his hope and his sustainer in his undertaking, al-Mahdi. The inspired part of his poem is this exordium ; here is the voice of one who knows the desert. It is true that

1-2 Tr. from text in *ʿAṣru'l-Ma'mūn*, II, 292.

the ideas expressed in it are in great part, perhaps entirely, hackneyed or conventionalized, yet one senses a freshness in their treatment; the composer is a man at the height of his power, not yet facing the sunset.

He proceeded amidst silence till he reached the lines :—

Can ye efface from heaven her stars  
with your hands or screen her crescent moon,  
or deny your Lord's word which Gabriel  
delivered to the Prophet, and he declared ?

when it was noticed that al-Mahdī, who had been listening in an ecstasy of delight, had gradually edged off his prayer-rug on to the carpet; when the last line had been declaimed he rewarded the author at the rate of a thousand dirhams per *bayt* of the hundred *bayts*,—the first time, it is stated, so large a total had been given to a poet of the Abbasids.<sup>1</sup>

The rulers of this dynasty were now in the transition period between Arab affinities and Persian predilections. They still could feel the tang of the desert, wide, changeless in its sands, changeless in its seasons save when Nature loosed her violence in lightning and cloud-burst, unsocial; but in this land of their adoption, Iraq, they were in contact with more volatile natures, seeking change and pushing out effort, and thought and feeling into the unknown, and were becoming increasingly susceptible to the sensuousness of rhythm sweet and impassioned; egotism whether in arbitrary or in diffident mood welcomed the panegyric. Both elements, the love of poetry and of praise, entered into the determination of their awards.

The above poem had apparently been already recited in the literary circle of Yūnus the Grammarian, or another, for it was a practice with Marwān to allow a year for composition, criticism and alteration of an ode before making it known to a wider public. Yūnus himself or perhaps the well-known poet and *rāwī* Khalaf, al-Aḥmar, esteemed it as surpassing in quality a certain poem of the renowned classic Maimūn b. Qays, al-A'shā.<sup>2</sup> Marwān was content to be placed near such a luminary, but had a sufficiently good conceit of himself to think he was not out-classed by any since the brilliant asterism containing Jarīr, al-Farazdaq and al-Akḥṭal.<sup>3</sup>

The narrative of its recitation to al-Mahdī has a parallel in an experience described by the same authority in connection with Hārūn'r-Rashīd and Marwān. He entered into the presence with other poets and declaimed a *qaṣīdah* of panegyric, only to be asked the same question as in the previous case, and to be again ignominiously extruded on the same pretext, that gifts and giver

<sup>1</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 42; cf. a similar statement as to his reward in ar-Ruṣāfah (*ibid.*).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 39, 40.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

had perished with Ma'n. By adroitness of behaviour he obtained admission some days later and recited a poem in which he says :—

By thy life, I forget not on the morn at al- [Tawīl.]  
 Muḥaṣṣab<sup>1</sup>  
 the signal of Salmā with her dyed fingers,  
 when the pilgrims had issued forth all but a  
 few  
 by various passages, group upon group.

He likewise rewarded him handsomely.<sup>2</sup> The parallelism is so striking that one may reasonably call in question the double event. His was evidently a personality round which stories gathered—they were so many that Ibn Khallikān, who loves to introduce narrative to brighten the long tale of his numerous biographical studies, has contented himself with but a few—and possibly jealousy or enmity made much play. It is to be hoped that the naïveté of the following remark is more humorous than its import true ; it has been said that when he entered into the presence of king or noble to declaim a eulogistic poem, this *bayt* was quoted against him and precluded all reward, and even a hearing :—

And we say : Whither travel after Ma'n  
 seeing gifts are ceased, and there is none to give ?<sup>3</sup>

Stories of his meanness are many ; niggardliness, and not the frugality that might have been expected of a poet with verses to sell, was a leading characteristic, all the more remarkable because of the abundance which he possessed, and the record rewards he received for each *bayt* of his panegyrics, from the Abbasids. His conduct in this respect is contrasted with that of his contemporary Salm b. 'Amr, al-Khāsir,<sup>4</sup> a gifted and versatile poet of Basrah, who was remunerated equally generously by al-Mahdi, but was a typical Bohemian, and his carefree abandon led to squandering and fixed on him the epithet of al-Khāsir (the loser).

It is stated that Marwān did not buy flesh except when a strong desire for it possessed him, and then he would order the head of an animal, not only because of its culinary possibilities, but because he knew the market-rate and his servant could neither cheat nor filch.

Age did not remove this infirmity of the mind, or certainly unsociable trait ; in the time of Hārūnū'r-Rashīd he purchased some flesh for half-a-dirham (c. threepence), and it was almost

<sup>1</sup> Name of the way between mountains between Makkah and Minā, so called from the many stones about ; also the place where pilgrims cast stones, at Minā.

<sup>2</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 42.

<sup>3</sup> *O.C.*, II, 147.

<sup>4</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 37.

finished cooking when an invitation arrived which he decided to accept; he therefore returned the meat to the butcher, making allowance for deterioration in value of only a *dāmiq* (c. one penny).<sup>1</sup>

A story is told of how he sat and listened to a satirical poem on himself by al-Jinnī, whom he had probably offended by doubting his poetic ability:—

Meanness stays in al-'Ijlān day and night, [Ṭawīl.]  
and in Marwān's house till the end of time;  
meanness ran seeking a place to cast her saddles,  
and passed over mainland and sea;  
and when Marwān came, it tented with him  
and said: We are pleased to stay till Resurrec-  
tion!  
Marwān has no jealousy concerning his wife,  
but is jealous concerning the cooking-pot.<sup>2</sup>

But the incident, with its sequence in Marwān's pleasure and not resentment, is not convincing, all the more so as authorship of the last *bayt* is attributed elsewhere to a member of Banū Bakr b. Wā'il.<sup>3</sup>

His account of the night of his greatest fear yields a story of the uncanny: 'I went with a riding-party for an interview with (Hārūnū'r-) Rashīd, and we came to a region wild and desert, and night enveloped us; we journeyed on across it, and became conscious only of a woman driving her camels behind us and urging them with calls—and lo, she was a ghou! And when the dawn grew bright she turned away from us with her possessions, and began saying:—

O star, morn is toward thee against me, [Rajaz.]  
for I am not of morn, nor it of me.'<sup>4</sup>

Mention has already been made of him in connection with al-Hādī's reign (r. 169-170 H.). at-Tabarī records further that Marwān entered the royal presence and recited:—

Were I immortalized after Imām Muḥammad's [Kāmil.]  
passing, I would not rejoice in long survival.

He recalled in verse the bounteousness of al-Mahdī, and was given promise of a generous recompense, though not on a scale to rival that of his father. Fate however removed al-Hādī before fulfilment.<sup>5</sup> But the *Afghānī* tells of an occasion on which he not only obtained for a panegyric money down, but by the exercise of a little tact had his name entered in the Civil List of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 44, 45.

<sup>5</sup> *Ṭab.*, III, 594.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

those days ; he had praised this monarch in a poem containing the *bayt* :—

The two days of his severity and largesse [Ṭawīl.]  
are so like none knows which has more merit.<sup>1</sup>

Hārūnū'r-Rashīd (r. 170–193 H.) succeeded to the throne. In 165 H. Marwān had already paid the latter, while still a prince, a tribute in verse. Hārūn was then the leader in the field and had made a victorious advance along the coast of the Bosphorus and forced Queen Irene to a truce of three years and the payment of a heavy indemnity.<sup>2</sup>

According to aṭ-Ṭabarī he liked poetry and its makers, and had a human weakness for panegyric, and was prepared to pay a high price for well-turned lines eulogising him. In 181 H., in which year he had again taken the field successfully against Irene, Marwān entered to him with these words of praise on his lips :—

Frontiers were closed by Hārūn and in affairs [Ṭawīl.]  
of Muslims resolutions fast established.

This poem, of which twenty-two *bayts* are given by the great historian, is not one specially selected by writers on style as an exemplar, but it brought him a rich reward in money, robes, and Byzantine slaves.<sup>3</sup>

It was necessary, as well as politic, if one would hope for recognition at court, to preserve good relations with the influential house of the Barmakids. Khālīd b. Barmak had started this family on its splendid career by the close of the Umayyad period, when he espoused the Abbasid cause ; he was ably succeeded by his son Yaḥyā, who long bore a heavy part of the burden of empire, and once endured imprisonment for conscience sake,<sup>4</sup> and when the years had taken full toll of his capacity and strength demitted office into the hands of his son al-Faḍl, who like him nobly lived and whose dismissal in 190 H., 805, inclined the empire towards its fall, and of another son, Ja'far, Hārūn's ill-starred favourite. Yaḥyā had recompensed Marwān so munificently for his eulogies that he could reprove him for his miserliness when report of it reached him : ' Your penuriousness is more evil in its effect on you than penury would be were you to fall into that state . . . ' <sup>5</sup>

With al-Faḍl his relations were somewhat closer. In 176 H. while holding a provincial governorship the latter was sent to Daīlam to deal with a very threatening movement led by Yaḥyā, the chief representative of the family of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. He

<sup>1</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Tab.*, III, 505 ; *The Cal.*, 470-1 ; Finlay, *Hist. of the Byzantine Emp.*, Bk. I, Ch. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Tab.*, III, 741.

<sup>4</sup> *The Cal.*, 474.

<sup>5</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 38.

successfully negotiated with Yahyā and induced him to visit Baghdad, where however he was treacherously treated. Marwān praised al-Faḍl, who, it may be mentioned incidentally, had no part in the dishonour done to a too trusting foe :—

Thou didst win—may Barmakid hand not wither [Ṭawīl.]  
wherewith thou didst close the rent in Banū  
Hāshim.<sup>1</sup>

In 178 H. al-Faḍl was appointed Governor of Khurasan ; Marwān obtained an audience of him in his camp before his departure and recited to him :—

Seest thou not generosity passed down [Ṭawīl.]  
from Adam till it reached al-Faḍl's hand ?  
When Abu'l-'Abbās'<sup>2</sup> sky became serene,  
what fine rain came to thee, and what heavy !  
When her child's hunger affrights the mother,  
she calls him by al-Faḍl's name and he bears up.  
Islam is quickened by thee—thou art honour  
to it ;  
thou art from folk whose young are mature.<sup>3</sup>

A splendid reward signified his appreciation of the poet's will to acknowledge and encourage, and the verses have a certain freshness in their colour-tone.

While in Khurasan he organized a militia half-a-million strong composed of '*Ajamīs* (non-Arabs), and of this force he sent twenty thousand to Baghdad to be at the Emperor's disposal. Marwān celebrated the achievement in a poem containing the lines :—

al-Faḍl is none other than a bright star, [Basīṭ.]  
that sets not in battles when the others set ;  
guard of the realm of a folk of splendid portion,  
in whose gifts heritage placed power.<sup>4</sup>

In 178 H. he returned from Khurasan, and Hārūn and his court in full array went forth to bid him welcome. Marwān seems to have found freer and happier expression in his eulogium on this occasion :—

We praise Ibn Yahyā's restorer, and at his advent [Ṭawīl.]  
the birds fly to us with happy portent ;  
our eyes slept not till they beheld him,  
nor ceased to gather tears till he returned ;  
his horse and foot came to us at morn—  
proudest spectacle of courage and leadership ;  
he drove from Khurasan the foe as morn's glow  
drives the enveloping dark and it withdraws ;

<sup>1</sup> Tab., III, 614 ; *The Cal.*, 479f.

<sup>3</sup> Tab., III, 632.

<sup>2</sup> I.e., as-Saffāh.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 631.

he is back with us whose route was yesterday  
in Merv, and men said : Our muster is dispersed !—  
what time he cast down the lock of every wrong,  
and with his pardon freed the captive chained ;  
and spread without favour, but fairly, among  
them

kind gifts continuing and repeated ;  
and banished from them their frights at fears,  
and seeking peace among them began and  
achieved ;

and to their orphans of his bounty gave,  
and kinder was than father, and more gracious ;  
did men seek the bound of Faḍl's generosity  
and courage, it would be found farther than  
the stars ;

Yaḥyā and Khālīd ascended, by aid  
of al-Faḍl, to each highest and noblest aim ;  
he is gentle with them who obey the Khalīfah,  
but gives sharp Indian blade rebel's blood to  
drink ;

his swords abase hypocrisy and idolatry,  
but to men of the Faith are everlasting honour ;  
he acquired strength from allegiance to the  
Elect,<sup>1</sup>

who crowned his merit with friendship of the  
Khalīfah,  
namesake of the Prophet, who doth open and  
close,  
through whom God gives all grace and with-  
holds ;

thou hast made free the Kābulī's hills,<sup>2</sup>  
and left no place there for error's fires ;  
and led up the horse that trampled his  
hordes—

slain and captive, routed and scattered ;  
thy favour returned to Ibnu'l-Barm what time  
he grieved, forsaken, seeing death, forlorn.<sup>3</sup>

Few families guiding a state or an empire's destiny have been  
so long lauded for their deserts, and they are not a numerous  
multitude who have so well become praise as several of the  
members of the Barmakids.

Ibn Khallikān gives 181 or 182 H.<sup>4</sup> as the year of Marwān's  
death ; but in the *Aghānī* a certain person speaks of having seen  
him, then a very old man, in Baghdad in the reign of Muḥammad  
b. Zubaidah, al-Amin (r. 193–8 H., 808–813)<sup>5</sup> ; and there is  
evidence of his having survived beyond the year 182 H. in the

<sup>1</sup> I.e., the Prophet.

<sup>2</sup> Tab., III, 636.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 635-6.

<sup>4</sup> *O.C.*, II, 119 ; Yāfi'ī, I, 389.

<sup>5</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 43.



statement by aṭ-Tabarī that in 189 H. there was an exchange of prisoners of war between the Muslims and the Byzantines, and in connection with this incident Marwān composed :

By thee captives were freed for whom were built [*Tawīl.*]  
prisons wherein is no friend to visit them,  
when freeing them baffled Muslims, who said :  
Idolaters' prisons are their graves ! <sup>1</sup>

This much is certain that he lived to a ripe old age.

But this work also gives an account, at second-hand, from one Ṣāliḥ b. 'Atiyyah, al-Adjam, who alleged that he had wormed himself into the confidence of the poet and his household, and strangled him one day when he lay sick and for the time being was unattended. The reason was offence he had given to the perpetrator, who belonged to the party favouring the cause of 'Alī's descendants against the Abbasids. According to Ibn Khallikān Marwān's prospects at court had prospered not for the single cause of the merits of his poems, but also because he opposed the Alid interest.

Already in the time of al-Mahdī Marwān had stated that he had incurred the hostility of Ya'qūb b. Dā'ūd, a *Rāḥidī*,<sup>2</sup> i.e. a member of the Shī'ah (Shiites), who reserve the right of succession to the Prophet for members of 'Alī's family. He had been imprisoned by al-Manṣūr as an adherent of that family, but had been forgiven by al-Mahdī, and raised within a short time to the highest honour in his gift. Enemies whispered suspicions into his patron's ear as to his undivided loyalty to the Abbasids.<sup>3</sup> Marwān held him to be a *Rāḥidī*, but whether he took active part in this denunciation of the favourite which led to his downfall and long confinement in a prison, is not stated. The occasion of Ya'qūb's enmity was Marwān's *bayt* supporting the Abbasid claim and cause :

How can there be—forsooth there cannot be ! [*Kāmīl.*]  
to daughters' sons the heritage of uncles ? <sup>4</sup>

These words were remembered against him and were a cause of provocation, but they certainly did not lead to his death immediately, for the earliest date given for that event is 181 H. It is related of Ja'far b. 'Affān, aṭ-Tā'i, the poet, that he replied to the above *bayt* in these terms :

Why cannot there be—forsooth there can be ! [*Kāmīl.*]  
to daughters' sons heritage of uncles ?  
A daughter has full-half one's property,  
while the uncle is left without share ;  
the freedman has no part in heritance,  
but prays in fear of the tempered blade.

<sup>1</sup> Tab., III, 707.

<sup>2</sup> Orig. a member of a certain sect of them—see Lane's Lex. s.v. رافض .

<sup>3</sup> *The Cal.*, 468.

<sup>4</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 43, 46 ; Tab., III, 539.

Partisan feeling must have been running very high if Ṣāliḥ did actually proceed to this extremity, for there does not seem to have been any specially personal grievance. He was a *rāwī* or professional reciter of ancient poems and rather a 'sponger' on society. His appearance can have made little compromise with beauty, for when Di'bil, a satirical poet who for the mischief of his tongue was always a refugee, failed to obtain from him something he had need of, he found sufficient ill-looks to suggest the lines :

The best of what's in Ṣāliḥ is his face— [Ṣarī'.]  
 then judge of the hidden from the seen ;  
 mine eye contemplates in him a form  
 which indicates his father's whoring.<sup>1</sup>

But the authenticity of this narrative of his murder and of the passages now to be considered is open to question. The statement that Marwān was a Jew emanates from 'Alī b. Muḥammad, an-Naufalī, who related it on his father's authority ; the stories of his meanness as exemplified in the contrast between his conduct and that of Salm, al-Khāsir, and in his buying only the heads of animals for his meals ; the allegation that he purchased a *qaṣidah* from a Bāhili and utilized it in one of his best poems ; and now this narrative emanates from Aḥmad b. 'Ubaidi'llāh b. 'Ammār, who quotes them from the above *rāwī* an-Naufalī, who again quotes his father as authority. Aḥmad was a *rāwī* of little if any note ; as these narratives are all prejudicial to Marwān, it is doubtful whether any credence at all should be extended to his statements. It is possible that he gratuitously cited an-Naufalī, a witness whose credibility cannot be impugned on such *prima facie* grounds, for he is often quoted by a historian so renowned as at-Ṭabarī. Infallibility cannot of course be claimed for this type of historian, who conformably with his method gave his authorities for each statement in a chain depending from the original witness and sometimes relied on a weak link ; and as Ibn Khallikān has remarked : '... anecdotes vary according to the different channels by which they are handed down'.<sup>2</sup> Yet comparison of such associates and estimation of statement according to probability afford the reader an opportunity of judging for himself of the merits of a case, and though the record is more tedious, yet the method may be safer on the whole than that of the modern biographer, who may misconstrue facts without supplying them and thereby affording the reader a chance of forming his own opinion.

His compositions fall into two categories, panegyric and elegy, two forms not entirely dissociate, for they have the recital of virtues in common. The notes of bravado (*ḥamāsah*) and

<sup>1</sup> *Agh.*, XVIII, 37, 46.

<sup>2</sup> *O.C.*, II, 147 ; tr. de Slane, III, 406.

brag (*fakhr*) are not heard in these post-classical poets who await auditions in kings' chambers. The ancient function of satire, to paralyse a tribal foe with invective, having gone, it is now no longer a communal, but a personal quarrel; Marwān had no such weapon in his quiver. Neither love nor wine roused his sensibilities, indeed were not allowed to, for parsimony sealed for him the channels of the exuberance of man's spirit. If he has not added to the gaiety of nations, he yet has said things worth saying and in a worthy way, and often praised with sincerity so that honour's head is higher raised; and in the gallery of fame, the remoter half admittedly, will be represented by his two odes of panegyric on al-Mahdi and Ma'n, and his elegy on the latter.

If sanction from outside his poetry were necessary for appraising him as a member of the front rank of the post-classicists, none would have more authentic claim to a hearing than Ibnū'l-A'rābi, to whose philological studies we owe a recension of a collection of ancient Arabic poetry, known as the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, made by his stepfather, al-Mufaḍḍal. In connection with Marwān's poem containing the *bayt* :—

Maṭar's folk on battle-day are like  
lions with cubs in the vale of Khaffān,

he is reported to have stated : Had he (Ma'n) given him all he possessed, he would not have paid him his due. One other great tribute he paid him,—he closed with him the list of Arabian poets whose diction is authoritative in matters of usage and taste, and recorded none after his.<sup>1</sup>

Ibnū'l-Mu'tazz (247–296 H.), a poet and famous authority on style, has likewise waxed enthusiastic over this poem. In his *Kitābu'sh-Shu'arā'* he has declared that Marwān in this 'brilliant ode' in 'l' to Ma'n surpassed the poets of his time. Ibn Khallikān agreeing describes it as 'lawful magic, chaste in diction and meaning, and it is due to him that he be preferred to the poets of his age and others beside'.<sup>2</sup>

An adverse note of criticism is not wanting; it is attributed to another pre-eminent philologist, al-Aṣma'i, who is said to have remarked that Marwān was post-classical and had no knowledge of the literary language.<sup>3</sup> The former part of the remark is historically accurate. The poets are classified as belonging to the pagan period; the Islamic, i.e. the period when Islam was first promulgated; and that of the *Muḥdathūn* or *Muwalladūn*, i.e. the post-classical. Al-Aṣma'i was a purist in linguistic matters, and drew his illustrations of correct and novel usage of words chiefly from the first of these periods. The second part of his remark would be destructive criticism; the two authorities for the statement are little known, but if it be

<sup>1</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 43.

<sup>2</sup> *O.C.*, II, 117.

<sup>3</sup> *Agh.*, IX, 40.

accepted, then it would mean that the great philologist had been disappointed in the range of his vocabulary and freshness in the application of words to the expression of an idea or its *nuances*. When Marwān takes the classical ode as model he approaches as near it as any of the poets of the post-classical period, and probably none outstrips him. It was impossible for him to adhere closely to his pattern; the time-spirit had changed and with it conditions and tastes. There is a proverb attributed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib which is truer to facts than we often care to admit :

النَّاسُ بِزَمَانِهِمْ أَشْبَهُ مِنْهُمْ بِآبَائِهِمْ

Its purport is that human beings have more affinity with their own generation than with any generation of their forefathers. It was natural therefore that al-Mahdi's son Ibrāhīm loved the music of his own age; he was an accomplished singer of its songs, and entered into competition with the renowned master of music Ishāq, al-Mauṣilī. The poem of Marwān to al-Mahdi at p. 79 *supra* is one of the songs to which he was devoted<sup>1</sup> :

One came to visit thee by night—hail to her vision !

There enters too the philological inevitability. The desert Arab had hundreds of names for his camel, the most familiar to his eyes of all his possessions; many of these were epithets describing the male and the female in all stages of growth from the embryonic, in all conditions of serviceableness from dietetic to warlike, and in various other states. Time brought simplification in terminology by eliminating the unnecessary, or for the tongues of 'Ajamīs (non-Arabs) the difficult of pronunciation or understanding. Marwān's diction is readily intelligible, and he might well be regarded in this respect as a forerunner of his younger contemporary Abu'l-'Atāhiyyah, who conceived and applied a plain poetic diction for the plain man.

---

<sup>1</sup> as-Ṣūlī, *O.C.*, 23.

### **The Child-world, and the Child of Araby.**

By A. H. HARLEY.

When we hear a child cry, we realize not only that it has a voice, but that all down the ages childhood's voice must have been heard for its insistence or persistence, even if affection had always made mothers listen out or anticipate. And yet it is remarkable that the archives of literature have preserved so little of their prattle, or pranks, or of interest in them and for them. The invention of printing, among its general favours, brought them into some prominence; till then they had no concern with sciences or arts that the manuscripts might notice them; for though men, women and children probably spoke and acted with the like proportion of serious to humorous and to trivial as we ourselves, the labour and cost of committing matter to writing in a fair hand left the young no consideration; that it spared us the publication of much adult ephemeral effusion is some compensation and reason for gratitude.

It was not till the latter half of the seventeenth century that writers in England definitely set themselves to prepare books for children. There were lesson-books for them in existence before this time, in which injunctions as to manners and morals received due meed of care, a mode of treatment of them which lasted through most part of last century. A few precocious little persons among them would not fail to pry into volumes for grown-ups, and a writer in 1557 gave warning of the risk therein to them: 'Keep them from reading of feigned fables, vain fantasies and wanton stories and songs of love, which bring much mischief to youth'. There was little for them, or even about them. It has been stated by a writer in the *Times Literary Supplement* that about the beginning of the 19th century 'cheap little paper-covered chap-books were produced in large quantities. Many contain narrative poems of the "Cock Robin" order, rhyming versions of popular tales like "Tom Thumb", "Dick Whittington", "Jack the Giant Killer". But they were not intended for children, though doubtless devoured by them'.

Children had little notice in literature till an evangelist preserved those words which Jesus spake concerning childlikeness being a symbol of heavenly-mindedness. In graven record, or sculptured, or on canvas their face is rare, and their features those of their seniors on a slightly reduced scale, which gives to them an even more immobile and characterless expression than that of their parents; their very clothes were but replicas of

those of grown-ups. Their whole world was given them ready-made to fit into. Youth was a first apprenticeship to labour and manhood, not an expectant waking up from sleep, as when :—

The slow light of rising day  
soft unseals the eyes of birds,  
that chirrup a protest in dismay :  
they were not taken by surprise ;

or a change over from dreaming to mystery and romance, over the coverlet and outside the room, and through the garden, out in the big space that opened into another, and one after other till the night closed down part of it. It was a quick phase and a short preparation, and not a big quarter of a long life, or rather a whole world and all of life as young eyes should see it. Even Shakespeare, before whom the learned, the thoughtful of all nations bow, makes us see love and laughter, and tragedy in a world that has no children.

A century ago the school was organized for discipline. The child was still the man in miniature, subordinate to the same rules of law and order.; indeed his was a stricter subordination, for a man could preside on his own bench and condone his own offences, but the child was tried as a man, by a man, and sentenced.

Two generations ago psychology became more of an experimental than an experiential science, and set itself to investigate the problem of the child being father of the man. And now there are numerous painstaking records concerning the child, and fortunately also many books of tales and verse written and illustrated specifically for him, and for him fairyland has been depicted in colour, and song, and romance and play.

Complaint has often been made, and is still rightly heard, that the appeal of many of these books is chiefly to grown-ups ; their understanding or appreciation lies outside the child-sphere. One reason for this is that intellect is at home in our world, while feeling is a stranger suspected or disliked. Feeling is the biggest factor in life's complexes. But it is youth's right. Religion, and melody, and dancing and poetry are all inspired by it ; they had their origin in the childhood of the world ; they belong to the child-part or phase of our nature, to which the poet-minstrel and the story-teller, now no longer with us, made appeal.

If this attitude and condition of things persisted in Europe so long, we can hardly expect anything different elsewhere. Some training to a standard there was, as for instance for young noble-men in archery in Persia, but there was no system embracing the child, or to be more explicit, there was no recognition of his play-instinct and interest. Few writers seem to have said anything on the subject, and perhaps none has surpassed in quality the little to which a renowned Persian gave expression,—the saintly al-Ghazālī (d. 504 H., 1111 A.D.), who pointed out



and led a way to a fuller faith, and made happiness a subject of research for the alchemy of the spiritual world, did not overlook the play-element in child-nature. In a short *Risālah* or *Essay on the Rearing of Children and Making them Familiar with Praiseworthy Qualities of Character*, he speaks with a Spartan firmness combined with a rationality often astonishingly modern, and a fair proportionment of the respective parts of children, parents, and pedagogues. He realizes the importance of activity and exercise for a portion of the day as a preventive of idleness. He would have the teacher, 'after the boy is gone out of school, permit him to play a nice game, to which he would turn for recreation from the fatigue of school, yet such that he would not be fatigued by play; for to prevent a boy from playing and require of him that he should study constantly will kill his heart and stultify his intelligence, and make life troublesome to him, so that he will seek some means of ridding himself of it altogether'. There is danger however for him in addiction to play, food, or other pleasure for the world is a place of passage, not of settlement.<sup>1</sup>

In a *Risālah*<sup>2</sup> by that famous writer on the natural sciences and the healing art Ibn Sinā (Avicenna; d. 428 H., 1073 A.D.) immediately preceding al-Ghazālī's in the work under reference there is no such recognition of the child as a little animal with a natural instinct for play. Hedonistic tendencies as a rule have little encouragement from these ancient monitors. One ought not of course to countenance the old non-conformist Abū 'Uбайдah Ma'mar (he was a Khārijite); though a scholar and a grammarian, yet 'in repeating passages of the Koran or relating Traditions he made mistakes designedly: "For", said he, "grammar brings ill luck"!'<sup>3</sup>

When we are very, very young we must play, for play is instinctive, and social too. Arab boys and girls play games, some of them the same as those of the children of the Arab tribes fourteen hundred years before, and some the same as young folks play in other lands. For just as the tales and fables of these children of Nature are found in other parts of the world, and as the idioms of the dwellers in other continents occasionally astonish us by their similarity to our own, so the youth of the world share not only the play-instinct, but in some cases the same games actually or basically. There is a large stock of common good among the nations.

Childhood was not invariably happy in tribal Araby. There were childish ailments, and amulets were worn against their evil source—of these phylacteries the 'Errant Prince' Imru'u'l-Qays speaks in his *Mu'allagah*-ode:

<sup>1</sup> *Madaniyyat al-'Arab* . . . , Md. Rushdī (Eg., 1329 H.): 121-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*: 113.

<sup>3</sup> *Wafayāt* . . . , Ibn Khallikān (Bulaq, 1299 H.): II, 141; tr. de Slane: III, 391.



And I diverted her thoughts from her little year-old  
wearing amulets<sup>1</sup>;

there was parental correction, and parental thwarting of desires ; rationing of stores, and thirst ; the long trail, and the attack ; hardships that mature or weaken, but shorten the days of youthfulness. Though sunlight is brave company, the night holds fears in sounds, and superstitions, and the bogeys the unthinking, unfeeling or impatient raise. A reflection of such a bogey we find in a line by al-Jumaih, who, in a poem of complaint that her tribe have intervened between his wife and him, states that sometimes she flies at him, at others to him away from danger :

If aught fearsome occur, she is like a smocked child  
thou keepest checking with fright of the wolf.<sup>2</sup>

But joy quickly dispels sad thoughts or memories, the accidentals in youth's enterprising scheme of things. Of diversions there was not a natural plenitude ; they had to be sought chiefly in games. The *mal'ab* was a place of play or recreation outside the black tents of the settlement ; a poet al-'Uryān b. Sahlah even makes its provision a distinctive characteristic of the generous owner of stocks and man of substance in contrasting him with a miserly one :

And I came to the abode of a sincere man, and round it  
were the stalls of horses, and the play-place of the  
young men.<sup>3</sup>

In this bit of ground the men had their archery with a ring-target, and other practice and contest, and hither the boys resorted and would naturally choose boys for partners or rivals ; but though the poetry is rather reticent, from inherited inability to give youth a place and with no forethought to conceal facts, the girls too had their pastimes there ; e.g. Dhu'r-Rummah in a reference to a young gazelle asleep speaks of it as :

Like a bracelet, cracked, of silver, found lying  
on a playground where the girls of the tribe had played.<sup>4</sup>

The famous *Mu'allagāt*, a collection of seven or, according to another tradition, ten selected odes, 'strung for ornament on the same chain of merit', or suspended and therefore set on high, contains several references to playthings. In the ode of 'Amr b. Kulthūm therein we read :—

As were swords twixt us and them  
*makhārīq* in the hands of players.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A Comm. on Ten Anc. Ar. Poems*, ed. Lyall (Cal., 1894) : b. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, ed. Lyall (Gibb. Mem. Ser.) : I, p. 27, b. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *al-Ḥamāsah*, Abū Tammām (ed. Freytag) : 712.

<sup>4</sup> *Mufaḍ.*, I, 877, f.n., b. 51 ; *Dīw.*, ed. Macartney (G.M.S.) : 75, b. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. Lyall : b. 37.

This Arabic word (sing. *mikhrāq*) occurs also in a saying attributed to 'Alī b. Abī Tālib, son-in-law of the Prophet, who had a fine gift of expressiveness, to the effect that lightning is the *makhārīq* of the angels, which is explained as meaning that lightning 'is the instrument with which the angels chide and drive the clouds'.<sup>1</sup> The usual account of the *mikhrāq* is that it consists of a cloth, or it may be rags, twisted tight and held in the hand to strike with in boys' battles; these 'strikers' or 'twisters' cleave the air as they speed to strike a rival's pate, or collide with each other.

The reference in the following is taken by Lyall to be to such knotted handkerchiefs, who accepts the explanation of the scholiast :—

'Bakr approached in their defence, and we were not able to lay hold of them; they played with their swords as though they were a party (of boys) at play at night (with the knotted handkerchiefs)'.<sup>2</sup>

In a poem attributed in the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, the anthology of ancient Arabic poetry called after its compiler, al-Mufaḍḍal (d. c. 169 H.) to al-Mumazzaq, but in another tradition to Yazīd b. al-Khadhdhāq, who is writing an anticipatory account of his own death, the twisted cloth appears to be the only possible signification,—the scholiast here adds turbans to the list of such cloths :

'And they lifted me up and said—"What a man was he!" and they wrapped me in a winding sheet as though I were a folded napkin (with which children play)';

there is a variant reading in the second hemistich however which omits mention of the 'napkin' altogether.<sup>3</sup>

In a famous storehouse of information concerning ancient Arab days and ways, the *Ḥamāsah*, an anthology of poems compiled, much later than their composition, by Abū Tammām, who died about 235 H., 850 A.D., we find an anonymous poet saying in praise of Banū Šuraim that there is none so splendid as they :

Or possessing more youths active in warfare,  
helping in leadership, or leading themselves.<sup>4</sup>

'Active' has here been used to render *mikhrāq*. The scholiast, at-Tabrīzī, in his commentary on this passage mentions the meaning of *mikhrāq* as striker, but adds that the term is also applied to a skin, or the like, which they inflate with air, and with which they strike one another. An inflated skin, or bladder would be a suitable rendering in some of the above passages.

<sup>1</sup> Lane's *Ar.-Eng. Lex.* : s.v. خرق.

<sup>2</sup> *Mufaḍ.* : I, 716, b. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* : I, 601, b. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ḥam.* : 702.

The dictionaries supply yet another signification, also that of a means of striking, viz. a wooden toy-sword. Imru'u'l-Qays says of a sword :

Many a gleaming blade, like a *mikhrāq*,  
I've worn its edge and keenness on legs and napes.<sup>1</sup>

In this verse it seems to denote the wooden sword used by boys in play. Localization of usage may yet be able to determine its significance, but sufficient here to note that the word has parallels in other lands for its application to a contest with knotted cloths, or inflated bladders, or toy-sword. The challenge and the tackle are a sound heard down all the ages.

KHUDHRŪF. In the most virile, and by general consensus, the best, of all the *Mu'allaqāt*, that of Imru'u'l-Qays, we read this similitude of his horse :

Swift as a youngster's *khudhrūf*, which there has made  
to go  
the continued plying of his hands with a cord attached.<sup>2</sup>

*Khudhrūf* here is usually taken to be a spinning-top, or something that whirls round when the cord is released ; a deep humming or buzzing (*dawī*) accompanies its motion. The scholiast explains the term by a synonym *kharrārah*. In his *Diwān* Imru'u'l-Qays again uses the word in speaking of a horse :

He overtook them, without fatigue, or second run—  
he was moving like the holed *khudhrūf* of a youngster.<sup>3</sup>

In a poem of Tufail we read of a breed of horses fleet as the wolf loping back to his lair in the *ghadā*-bushes, and each horse :

Makes him who is mounted on his back taste  
the shadows of *khadhārif*, as he flashing speeds.<sup>4</sup>

This *bayt* means that as the *khudhrūf* revolves so swiftly as to be shadowless, so the rider is borne at such a pace that no shadow is cast,—no more than that of a *khudhrūf*. The scholiast in this case also explains by *kharrārah*, which might well have been apposite because of the sound that it made, such being apparently of a gurgling or rustling and intermittent nature. This synonym he gives a little later in the same poem in connection with the same word, and again in reference to his tribe's horses :

When it is said : ' Check them ! ' , while they are straining  
hard,  
they are pulled up short together, like a youth's pierced  
*khudhrūf*.<sup>5</sup>

The spinning-top is not an impossible meaning in these verses, but the figure seems more likely that of a circular piece of

<sup>1</sup> *Diwān*, ed. de Slane : p. 30, b. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Lyall : b. 59.

<sup>3</sup> *Diw.* : 24, b. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. Krenkow (G.M.S) : No. 1, b. 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* : b. 18.

leather, similar to the whirligig or 'saw', often merely the round lid of a small tin, with which children in the West play, making it rotate by means of a cord passed through two holes in the centre and then joined at its two ends and carried over the thumbs on each side of the saw; a slight rotating and stretching soon set it revolving.

DUWWĀMAH and FALKAH are terms used synonymously of the spinning-top. The former is appropriate in this respect that, when a toy is spinning fast, it seems as if it 'continues standing still'; it is asleep. The latter word signifies something spherical, and the whorl of a spindle. When wound round with string and thrown, it spins.

So far no reference has come to hand in which the top was 'whipped'. Much came in over the Syrian border, including even some of the drinking customs and associations found in Lesbos and Byzantium, and it would be a little surprising if boys did not whip their tops, for this was a practice found in Lesbos as early as 600 B.C.<sup>1</sup>

The game of Tip-cat, or Cat and Bat, has spread its popularity among young people in many lands. It is known as *Ghōk-Chōb*, *Chalak-Masta*, in Persia; in Hindostan as *Gulli-Dandā*; to the Arabs as *Miqṭā'*-(or *Miqṭā')**Qulak*. *Miqṭā'* denotes the bat, or striking-instrument in the hand of the person in play. Labīd b. Rabī'ah makes use of the figure thus in regard to his she-camel:

Is she like that, or an onager, ill-made,  
rough-handling the milkless she-asses as with a bat? <sup>2</sup>

The poet at-Ṭirimmāh employs it figuratively of one who drives or urges:

And they move on towards the water, there beguiling them  
an ass braying and raging, a 'bat' for the wild asses.<sup>3</sup>

'Amr b. Kulthūm utilized the 'Cat' to impress his figure:

And nought protects women in howdahs like a stroke  
from which you see forearms flying like tip-cats.<sup>4</sup>

The game al-Bī'r (the Well), as described in *Arabia of the Wahhabis*,<sup>5</sup> is probably the linear descendant of the ancient Arab game, and Tip-cat only a developed form of it.

BA'R, or BA'AR, is a game illustrative of universal boy's resourcefulness in providing his own amusement. The tribes had no toy-factory; toys were probably pretty crude, unless among these warrior-herdsmen or the refugees from tribes, or the brigands, or the vagrants there was one with the deft skill

<sup>1</sup> *Sappho*, A. Weigal: 82.

<sup>2</sup> *Delectus* . . . , Nöldeke: 102, b. 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Div.*, ed. Krenknow: 107, b. 65.

<sup>4</sup> *Mu'a.*, ed. Lyall: b. 90.

<sup>5</sup> By J. St. J. Philby: 116.

in craftsmanship that calls forth youthful hero-worship. When fashioner and material failed, there was scope for ingenuity; hence presumably this game, to which was given the name for the dung of camels or other cloven-hoofed animals. 'Amir b. at-Tufail refers to it in a verse in which he speaks disparagingly of enemy-tribes :

Bald, minute polls, and noses theirs  
like dung a youth strings in the playground.<sup>1</sup>

The reference here seems to be to a game like 'conkers', which boys in the West play by stringing one or more dried horse-chestnuts and wielding them stroke about against a similarly strung conker of a rival.

FI'ĀL, FIYĀL, FAYĀL, MUFA'YALAH. The game thus variously known by forms from the same root is one requiring little more than the bare desert could provide, sand; earth was sometimes used instead. Arab lads of the desert heaped up sand or earth; then the *Mufā'il*, i.e. the person in play, secreted something in it, and divided it into two parts with his hand, and asked of one of the others in which portion it was concealed. If the answer proved right he won; if wrong the one in play said: Your opinion is at fault (*fāla*). Labīd b. Rabī'ah adapts the similitude of the game thus :

His forelegs cleave the shallow sands of ad-Dahnā',  
like the player for a wager playing *fi'āl*.<sup>2</sup>

Ṭarafah makes use of the simile of its player :

Their prow doth cleave the mass of waters there  
as parts *fi'āl*-player the earth with his hand.<sup>3</sup>

Apparently this game is also called BUQAIRĀ. Ṭufail al-Ghanawī refers in a poem to a raid of his people on the tribe 'Tai' in which he says of his own kinsmen :

They remain staying around Mount Mutālī',  
their sportsground like marks made by *buqairā*-player.<sup>4</sup>

His people exercised so much in the sportsground that their horses' hoofs dug into it and threw up hoof-marks like the heaps players made in the course of this game.

In the collection known as *al-Mufaddaliyyāt*, a poet al-Musayyab b. 'Alas describes his she-camel thus :—

Her forelegs move briskly because of her speeding, as were  
she playing ball with the two hands of a player on a pitch.<sup>5</sup>

For player (*lā'ib*) there is a variant *māqit*, one who plays with a ball. The final expression, 'on a pitch', has been taken to

<sup>1</sup> *Dīw.*, ed. Lyall (G.M.S.) : Frag. II, b. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Delect.* : 102, b. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Mu'a.*, ed. Lyall : b. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Dīw.* : 22, b. 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Mufaḍ.* : I, 96, b. 13; II, 31, b. 13.

mean 'with a stick', a polo stick (*saḷajān*)<sup>1</sup>—the Arabicized form of the Persian *chaugān*, 'a bat' or 'club', to the acceptance of which however there is more than the grammatical obstacle in the attached preposition.<sup>2</sup> But others understand a ball-game in which the ball is bounced with the hand; possibly it stands in collateral descent with the game of Racquets, a term which it has been suggested represents the Arabic *rāḥat*, the palm of the hand; the French name for the original form of the game is Paume (the palm of the hand).<sup>3</sup>

KHARĪJ, or KHARĀJ, was a guessing-game, in which the players called out '*Kharāji*'. The person in play is said to have held something in his hand and called to the others: 'Elicit what is in my hand'. Or, Lane thinks, it may have been like the game *Morra* of ancient and modern Italy, known also in very remote time in Egypt, 'in which one of the players puts forth some, or all, of his fingers, and another is required to name instantly the number put forth, or to do the same'. The verse in which Abū Dhu'aib al-Hudhali has mentioned it along with *mikhrāq* in his reference to lightning is as follows:

I was wakeful because of it one evening, as were it  
*makhārīj* under which 'Kharij' was being called out.<sup>4</sup>

UMBŪTHAH (أنبوثة) was another form of guessing-game for children. In this case something was buried in the ground, and the person who was successful in locating it was declared the winner.

Men are often referred to as big children, for they play, and not always for exercise, or in the attempt to recreate the romance their yesterdays held, but for the love of it. A reference to some of their games and sports is therefore not out of place here, all the more so as some of these were pastimes common to both, 'big' children and little.

MAISIR made that appeal which a gamble always makes to human nature. Ten untipped and featherless arrows (*qidāḥ*) were shuffled in a bag or the hand of the holder; of these seven were winners, and entitled the drawers to portions of the camel slaughtered for the gamble.<sup>5</sup>

Horse-racing (RIHĀN) for a wager was a sport after the heart of lithe men with horse-flesh for ever famous by reason of the speed, stamina and appearance of the animals. The contest

<sup>1</sup> Lane's *Lex.*: s.v. صرّج and صولج; see also Ibn Khall. (Eg.): I, 111; de Slane, I, 256.

<sup>2</sup> *Mufaḍ.*: I, 96, b. 13; II, 31, b. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Encyc. Brit.*: s.v. Racquets, f.n.

<sup>4</sup> Lane's *Lex.*: s.v. خرّج.

<sup>5</sup> *The L. Poem of the Arabs*, by Shanfarā, tr. Redhouse: b. 32. Described by Lyall: *Diwān* of 'Amir b. at-Tufail (G.M.S.), p. 103. See also *Qur'ān*: II, 219; V, 90-1.

between Dāhis and Ghabrā', of 'Abs and Dhubyān, respectively, two brother-tribes, is a classic reference. Unfortunately tribal jealousy induced one side to play a knavish trick, and time, not tears or blood, removed the hate.<sup>1</sup> Riding JARID,<sup>2</sup> in which feats of horsemanship and lance-throwing as thrilling as any neck-risking deed could be, appears to be of Turkish cult.

In over the Iraq border from China or India came CHESS, and from Persia NARD, a species of trictrac or backgammon with apparently ossicles from animals' feet for dice (نص : كعب) originally; but these probably did not penetrate among the tribesmen.

A square-game called QIRQ, played with pebbles in interior squares, is mentioned in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*.<sup>3</sup> It is also known as SUDDAR, which is taken to be an Arabicized form of the Persian *Sih Darah*.

A game Hadraq or Hadraj with pellets of camel-dung or stones placed in holes, now played in the Hījāz, and by slaves in Najd, has possibly an old-time representative. It is played, as described in *Arabia of the Wahhābis*,<sup>4</sup> with eight or nine small cavities scooped out of the ground and some pebbles or pellets of camel-dung.

The throwing of the disc (*miṭaththah*), made of wood, in the sport TATHTH, found entrance probably at a late date; certainly there was neither a pentathlon contest, nor any event for the discobolus in a popular assembly.

FANZAJ was apparently a dance of the Nabataeans, dwellers since ancient time and agriculturalists in North-West Arabia, by the 'Old Spice Road'. The renowned writer in *rajaz*-metre, al-'Ajjāj, makes mention of it:

In the shelter of an *Arṭā*-tree and a curving dune,  
like Nabataeans circling round playing *al-fanzaaj*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *K. al-Agh.*: XVI, 23, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *The Romance of Isabel Lady Burton*, W. H. Wilkins: 412. *Constantinople* . . . , R. Walsh: 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Agh.*: IV, 51; *Ramnāt* . . . (Bei.): I, 63.

<sup>4</sup> *o.c.*, J. St. J. Philby: 117.

<sup>5</sup> *Dīw.*, ed. Ahlwardt: p. 8, ll. 15-16.



**Some astronomical references from the Mahābhārata  
and their significance.**

By P. C. SENGUPTA.

Our aim in the present paper is to discuss and interpret astronomically some of the time references in the *Mahābhārata*, collected from Books V–XIII. The work *Mahābhārata* has undergone many changes in the course of long ages that have elapsed since its beginning at the time of the Pāṇḍavas. The present compilation began about the time of the Maurya emperors. There are in it mention of the Buddhist monks and the Buddhists in several places.<sup>1</sup> Again one astronomical statement runs thus :—

‘First comes the day and then night, the months begin from the light half, *nakṣatras* begin with *Śravaṇā* and the seasons with winter.’<sup>2</sup>

For 1931 A.D., the celestial longitude of *Śravaṇā* (*Altair*) was  $300^{\circ} 49' 7''$ . According to the modern *Sūrya Siddhānta* the polar longitude of this star is  $280^{\circ}$ ,<sup>3</sup> while Brahmagupta in his *Brāhmasphuṭa Siddhānta* quotes its earlier polar longitude as  $278^{\circ}$ .<sup>4</sup> Hence according to the former work, the star *Śravaṇā* itself marks the first point of the *nakṣatra*, and according to the latter, the *nakṣatra* begins at  $2^{\circ}$  ahead of the star. The *Mahābhārata* stanza quoted above shows that the winter solstitial colure passed through the star *Altair* (*Śravaṇā*) itself or through a point  $2^{\circ}$  ahead of it, as the season winter is always taken in Hindu astronomy to begin with the winter solstice. The passage indicates that winter began when the sun entered the *nakṣatra* *Śravaṇā*. It shows that the star *Altair* had at that time a

<sup>1</sup> Book I, Ch. 70 : लोकायनिकमुल्लेख समन्नादनुनादितम् ॥ 2889 of Ādi Parva; Book VII, Ch. 45, St. 30, which runs thus : अथोदीच्याश्चाङ्गका-  
मागधश्च शिशुन धर्मानुपजीवन्ति बृद्धाः । Also Book XII, Chapter 218,  
Stanza 31, etc., contains the Buddhist doctrines of rebirth. Asiatic Soc.  
Edn. of the *Mahābhārata*.

<sup>2</sup> अहः पूर्वं ततो रात्रिर्मासाः शुक्लादयः स्मृताः ।

अवषादीनि ऋक्षाणि ऋतवः शिशिरादयः ॥ २ ॥

*Asvamedha*, Ch. 44, St. 2.

<sup>3</sup> वैश्वान्ते अवषश्चितिः । *Sūrya Siddhānta*, VIII, 4.

<sup>4</sup> मकरेष्टनखैः *Brāhmasphuṭa Siddhānta*, Ch. X, 3.

celestial longitude of  $270^\circ$  or  $268^\circ$  according to the *Brāhma-sphuṭa Siddhānta*. The present longitude of *Altair* may be taken at  $301^\circ$  nearly. The total shifting of that solstitial point has been now  $31^\circ$ , which indicates a lapse of time = 2,232 years. This means the year 297 B.C. If we accept Brahmagupta's statement for the position of this star, the date is pushed up to 441 B.C. Hence there is hardly any doubt that the *Mahābhārata* began to be compiled in its modern form from 400 to 300 B.C.<sup>1</sup> Before this there were known two books the *Bhārata* and the *Mahābhārata* as we find mention in the *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra*.<sup>2</sup> The great epic, as we have it now, has swallowed up both the earlier works, and the oldest strata in it can be found with great difficulty.

#### THE TIME REFERENCES FROM THE MAHĀBHĀRATA.

We shall now try to set forth some of the time references as found in the present *Mahābhārata*, which we understand to be the oldest. In these references there is no mention of *tithis*. We have the mention of an *āmāvāsya* (not *amāvasyā*) or the period of the moon's invisibility ; in some places time is indicated by the moon's conjunction or nearness to certain stars.

(i) In the *Udyoga Parva* or Book V, Ch. 142, stanza 18, runs as follows :—

‘From the seventh day from to-day, the moon's period of invisibility will begin ; so begin the battle in that, as the presiding deity of this new moon has been declared by the wise to be Indra.’<sup>3</sup>

This is taken from the speech of Kṛṣṇa to Karna at the end of his unsuccessful peace mission to the Kaurava Court. It means that before the Bhārata battle broke out there was a new moon near the star *Jyēṣṭhā* or *Antares* of which the presiding deity is Indra. This new moon marked the beginning of the synodic month of *Agrahāyana*. But the battle did not actually begin on the day of this new moon. For on the eve of the first day of the fight Vyāsa thus speaks to Dhṛtarāṣṭra :—

<sup>1</sup> Cf. S. B. Dīkṣita's भारतीय ज्योतिःशास्त्र, page 111, 2nd edition. He estimates the date at 450 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> “सुमन्तु-जैमिनि-वैशम्पायन-पैलसूत्रभाष्य-भारत-सहाभारत-धर्मार्थाचार्या जानन्ति”

*Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra*, Ch. 3, K. 4, Sūtra 4.

<sup>3</sup> सप्तमात्रापि दिवसादामावास्या भविष्यति ।

संयामे युज्यतां तस्यां तां ह्यहः शक्रदेवताम् ॥ १८ ॥

*Bk. V, Ch. 142, St. 18.*

(ii) 'To-night I find the full moon at the *Kṛttikās* (*Pleiades*) lustreless, the moon became of a fire-like colour in a lotus-hued heaven.'<sup>1</sup>

If there be a new moon at the star *Antares*, the next full moon cannot be at the star group *Pleiades*. At the mean rate the moon takes exactly 12 days 23 hours or about 13 days to pass from the star *Antares* to the star group *Pleiades*. The moon was about 13 days old and not full. Vyāsa by looking at such a moon thought it to be full. There are other references to show that the moon could not be full on the eve of the first day of the battle. On the 14th day of the battle the Rākṣasa hero Ghatotkaca was killed in the night fight. The contending armies were thoroughly tired and slept on the battlefield, and the fighting was resumed when the moon arose after three-quarters of the night were over. There was a truce declared at midnight between the armies till the rising of the moon at the request of Arjuna.<sup>2</sup> How and when the fight was resumed are described in the following way :—

(iii) 'Just as the sea is raised up and troubled by the rise of the moon so upraised was the sea of armies by the rise of the moon : then again began the battle, O King, of men wishing blessed life in the next world, for the destruction of men of this world.'<sup>3</sup>

As to the time when the fight was resumed we have the statement :—

(iv) 'The battle was resumed when only one-fourth of the night was left.'<sup>4</sup>

1 आलक्षे प्रभया दीनां पौर्णमासीं च कार्त्तिकीं ।

चन्द्रोद्भूदग्निवर्णस्य पद्मवर्णे नभःस्फले ॥

*Bhīṣma Parva* or Bk. VI, Ch. 2, 23.

2 अर्द्धरात्रिः समाजज्ञे निद्रान्धानां विशेषतः ।

सर्व्वे ह्यासन्निरुत्थाह्वाः क्षत्रिया दीनचेतसः ॥ १६ ॥

ते यथं यदि मन्यध्वमुपारमत सैनिकाः ।

निमीलयन्त चात्रैव रणभूमौ मुहूर्त्तकम् ॥ २७ ॥

*Droṇa*, Ch. 185.

3 यथा चन्द्रोदयोद्भूतः क्षुभितः सागरोऽभवत् ।

तथा चन्द्रोदयोद्भूतः स बभूव वलार्णवः ॥ ५५ ॥

ततः प्रवृत्ते युद्धं पुनरेव विशाम्यते ।

लोके लोकविनाशाय परलोकमभीक्ष्णताम् ॥ ५६ ॥

*Droṇa*, Ch. 185.

4 त्रिभागमात्रशेषायां रात्र्यां युद्धमवर्त्तत ॥ १ ॥

*Droṇa*, Ch. 187, 1.

Thus the moon arose that night when one-fourth or sometime of the night was left, and the description of the moon was as follows :—

(v) 'Then the moon which was like the head of the bull of Mahādeva, like the bow of Cupid fully drawn out, as pleasant as the smile of a newly married wife, slowly began to spread her golden rays.'<sup>1</sup>

It was a crescent moon with sharp horns that rose sometime before the sunrise, and was consequently about 27 days old. From this it is clear that the Bhārata battle was not begun either on the new moon day spoken of in reference (i) nor on the following full moon day and that she was really about 13 days old on the eve of the first day of the battle, though apparently she was nearly full. It was at best the *Anumati Paurṇamāsī* or the first night of the moon's apparent fullness.<sup>2</sup>

On the 18th day of the battle, Valadeva, Kṛṣṇa's half-brother, was present at the mace-duel between Duryodhana and Bhīma. He just returned from a tour of pilgrimage to the holy places, which had lasted 42 days. He says :—

(vi) 'Forty-one days have elapsed since I went out for this tour; I went out with the moon at *Puṣyā* and have returned with the moon at *Śravaṇā*.'<sup>3</sup>

Hence on the day of the mace-duel, the moon was near to the star *Śravaṇā* or *Altair*, and the moon at the mean rate takes exactly 18 days 8 hrs. and 24 min. or 18 days nearly to pass from *Alcyone* to *Altair*. This also confirms the statement made above that on the eve of the first day of the battle, the moon was near to the star group *Kṛttikā* or *Alcyone*, and that she was about 13 days old.

On the 10th day of the battle at sunset, Bhīṣma the first general of the Kaurava armies fell on his 'bed of arrows', became incapacitated for further participating in the fight and expired after 58 days, as soon as it was observed that the sun had turned north. Yudhiṣṭhira came to the battlefield to see Bhīṣma expire and to perform the last rites. The passage from the *Mahābhārata* runs thus :—

(vii) 'Yudhiṣṭhira, having lived at Hastināpura for fifty nights (after the battle was over), remembered that the day of expiration of the chief of the Kauravas (Bhīṣma)

<sup>1</sup> हरदृषोत्तमगात्रसमद्युतिः स्मरशरासनपूषसमप्रभः ।

नववधूस्मितचारुमनोहरः प्रविद्युतः कुसुदाकरबान्धवः ॥ ४८ ॥

*Drona*, Ch. 185, 48.

<sup>2</sup> *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, XXXII, 17; also *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, VI, 10.

<sup>3</sup> चलारिशदहान्यद्य द्वे च मे निःसृतस्य वै ।

पुष्येण संप्रयातोऽस्मि श्रवणे पुनरागतः ॥

*Salya*, Ch. 34, 6.

had come. He went out of Hastināpura with a party of priests, after having seen that the sun had stopped from the southerly course, and that the northerly course had begun.'<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from the above passage that at the time of the Pāṇḍavas there were special observers of the equinoxes and the solstices. As regards the equinoxes, they probably took that day as the equinoctial day on which the sun either rose or set exactly at the east or west point. As to the solstices, they probably took that day for the solstice which was the middle day of the entire period during which the sun seemed to remain stationary at the rising or setting points on the horizon at the extreme north or the extreme south.<sup>2</sup> The *Mahābhārata* does not state how these phenomena were observed or determined. Anyhow Yudhiṣṭhira observed that the sun had turned north before he started out from his capital to see Bhīṣma on his 'bed of arrows' about to expire. When he met Bhīṣma at Kurukṣetra, he (Bhīṣma) thus spoke to him :—

(viii) 'It is a piece of good luck, O, Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Kuntī, that you have come with your ministers. The thousand rayed glorious Sun has certainly turned back. Here lying on my bed of pointed arrows, I have passed 58 nights; this time has been to me as endless as a hundred years. O, Yudhiṣṭhira, the lunar month of Māgha is now fully on and its three-fourths are over. This half month ought to be bright.'<sup>3</sup>

1 जषिला शर्वरीः श्रीमान् पद्माशन्नगरोत्तमे ।  
समयं कौरवायस्य सस्वार पुरुषर्षभः ।  
स निर्यथौ गजपुरादुयाजकेः परिवारितः ।  
दृष्ट्वा निवृत्तमादित्यं प्रेष्टं चोत्तरायणम् ॥

*Anuśāsana*, or Bk. XIII, Ch. 167, 5-6 : This passage shows that almost the whole of the *Sānti* and *Anuśāsana parvas* were later additions to the present *Mahābhārata*.

<sup>2</sup> For finding the middle day of the year or the *Viṣuvan*, which in one sort of calendar of the age of the Brāhmaṇas, was the day of the summer solstice, the sun was observed to remain stationary at the rising point for 21 days and the middle day or the eleventh day was considered to be the true middle day of the year or the day of the summer solstice. *Āitareya Brāhmaṇa*, XVIII, 18, quoted by S. B. Dikṣita in his *भारतीय ज्योतिःशास्त्र*, 2nd edition, page 47.

3 दिष्ट्या प्राप्तोऽसि कौन्तेय सद्दामात्यो युधिष्ठिर ।  
परिवृत्तोऽहि भगवान् सदृशं शुद्धिवाकरः ॥  
अष्टपञ्चाशत् रात्र्यः शयानस्याद्य मे गताः ।  
शरेषु निशिताग्रेषु यथा वर्षशतं तथा ॥  
माघोऽयं समनुप्राप्तो मासः सौम्यो युधिष्ठिर ।  
त्रिभागशेषः पक्षोऽयं शुक्लो भवितुमर्हति ॥

*Anuśāsana* or Bk. XIII, Ch. 167, 26-28.

Here the last sentence was a pious wish not materialized.<sup>1</sup> The lunar months here used are undoubtedly from the light half of the month for reasons set forth below:—

(A) Time from the new moon at the star			
<i>Antares</i> to the moon's reaching the			
<i>Kṛttikāś</i>	..	..	13 days.
Bhīṣma's generalship	..	..	10 "
Bhīṣma on death-bed	...	..	58 "
TOTAL			81 days.

(B) Again from the new moon at <i>Antares</i> or			
the beginning of the synodic month			
of Agradhāyana till its end	..	29.5 days.	
The synodic month of Pauṣa.	..	29.5 "	
Three-fourths of the month of Māgha..	..	22.0 "	
TOTAL			81 days.

Hence these two reckonings are corroborative of each other. If, on the other hand, we assume that the lunar months counted here were taken as commencing from the dark half of the month and ending with the light half, the synodic month of Agradhāyana would be half over with the new moon at *Antares*. From that time till  $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of Māgha were over, we get only:—

(C) Half of Agradhāyana			
The month of Pauṣa	..	29.5 "	
Three-fourths of Māgha	..	22.0 "	
TOTAL			66.25 days.

The number of days here counted falls short of the 68 days, viz., Bhīṣma's generalship of 10 days + Bhīṣma on death-bed of 58 days. This third reckoning thus is not consistent with the *Mahābhārata* references quoted already and does not tally with the accounts (A) and (B) shown above. It is thus evident

<sup>1</sup> The original word in place of *śukla* was perhaps *kṛṣṇa* and a subsequent redactor changed the word to *śukla*, to bring out the approved time for the death of Bhīṣma. Nilakanṭha, the commentator of the *Mahābhārata* quotes a verse from the *Bhārata Sāvitrī*, which also says that 'Bhīṣma was killed by Arjuna on the 8th day of the dark half of the month of Māgha': see Bhīṣma Parva, Ch. 17, Stanza 2. In an edition of the *Bhārata Sāvitrī* to which I had access at the Imperial Library, Calcutta, the verse runs as 'Bhīṣma was killed in the month of Agradhāyana on the 8th day of the dark half'. This of course refers to the day on which Bhīṣma fell on his 'bed of arrows'; 58 days after that—i.e. exactly one day less than full two synodic months becomes the 7th day of dark half of Māgha. Hence also Bhīṣma expired in the dark half of Māgha and not in the light half.

that the present-day lunar months which end with the full moon and a half month earlier than the astronomical lunar months ending with the new moon are not used in these references. It is clear that Bhīṣma expired on the 8th day of the dark half and not of the light half of the astronomical synodic month of Māgha.

#### DAY OF BHĪṢMA'S DEATH AND THE EKĀṢṬAKĀ.

As has been shown the day of Bhīṣma's death was an *Ekāṣṭakā* day, but it could not be the true *Ekāṣṭakā* day of the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* and of the *Tāndya Brāhmaṇa*, which does not happen every year.<sup>1</sup> The true *Ekāṣṭakā* was that day at the last quarter of the month of Māgha, at which the moon was very near to the star *Antares* or *Jyesthā*,<sup>2</sup> as it is defined in the *Āpastamba Grhya Sūtra*, VIII, 21, 10. Such an *Ekāṣṭakā* can only fall in the year in which the full moon of the lunar month of Māgha happens very near to the star *Maghā*. In our own times, for example, such an event took place on :—

the 3rd March in 1929 A.D.,  
 the 28th February in 1932 A.D.,  
 the 26th February in 1935 A.D.

And of these dates the two underlined were the true *Ekāṣṭakā* days. The *Ekāṣṭakās* of the intervening years were not the true ones. In the days of the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, the true *Ekāṣṭakā* day was the day of the winter solstice. Bhīṣma's death fell on an ordinary *Ekāṣṭakā* day.

It might be argued that by making Bhīṣma to lie on his death-bed for 58 days, a subsequent interpolator wanted to push up the year of the Bhārata battle to an age of hoary antiquity, I do not consider that possible. Firstly the traditions for the day on which the sun turned north or south are many as found in Vedic literature :

- (i) The full moon at the Pūrva Phalguni or the new moon of Māgha,<sup>3</sup> for which the date is about 3100 B.C.
- (ii) The *Ekāṣṭakā* day of the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, the date for which the date is about 2991 B.C.
- (iii) The full moon at *Maghā* or *Regulus* for which the mean date is about 2350 B.C. as we shall see later on.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by B. G. Tilak in his *Orion*, pages 44-45.

<sup>2</sup> Also quoted by B. G. Tilak in his *Orion*, page 48 footnote.

<sup>3</sup> *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa*, V, i; Do., XIX, 3; *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VI, Kāṇḍa, Ch. 2, Br. 2, 18.



- (iv) Four days before the full moon at *Maghā*,<sup>1</sup> for which the date is about 2062 B.C.
- (v) Sun at the beginning of the *nakṣatra Maghā*,<sup>2</sup> marking the summer solstice, the date for which is about 1900 B.C., the beginning of the *nakṣatra Maghā* being taken at 6° behind the star *Maghā* or *Regulus*, according to the *Pañcasiddhāntikā*, XIV, 36.
- (vi) Sun turning south at the middle of the *nakṣatra Aśleṣā*, of the *Jyotiṣavedāṅga* period,<sup>3</sup> the date for which was about 1400 B.C.

If the interpolator wanted to push up the date of the Bhārata battle, he might make the day of Bhīṣma's death, the day of the new moon of *Māgha* or the day of the full moon at the Pūrva Phalgunis (δ Leonis), which would have made the year, the same as the beginning of the astronomical *Kali Yuga*.

Secondly it is definitely stated as shown above that the sun's turning north had been observed by Yudhiṣṭhira before he started out from his capital to see Bhīṣma about to expire.

Thirdly our calculation will corroborate that the sun turned north one day before Bhīṣma's death, as observed by Yudhiṣṭhira.

Hence the day of Bhīṣma's death, as stated in his words as having come 58 days after his falling on his 'bed of arrows', cannot be taken as an interpolation by any subsequent astronomer.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REFERENCES.

From these references it is possible to determine the date of the Bhārata battle. We shall use two METHODS, but both the results will be approximate. In the first method we shall, for the sake of convenience, assume that *the nearness of the moon to the several stars as equivalent to exact equality in celestial longitude of the moon with those stars*. With this meaning of 'nearness' we may derive the following sets of data for finding the year of the Bhārata battle.

#### *Data for the calculation of the Date of the Bhārata battle by the First Method.*

- (a) There was a new-moon at the star *Antares*, before the battle broke out and the sun turned north in 81 days.

<sup>1</sup> ते चतुरहे पुरस्तात् माघौ पौर्णमासौ दीक्षन्ते । तेषामष्टकायां क्रयः सम्पद्यते ।

*Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, 16, 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Maitrī Upaniṣat*, VI.

<sup>3</sup> *Yajusa Jyotiṣa*, stanza 7.

(b) On the eve of the first day of the battle, the moon 13 days old was in conjunction with *Kṛttikā* or *Alcyone*, and the sun turned north in  $10+58 = 68$  days.

(c) On the 18th day of the battle, moon 31 days old was in conjunction with *Śravanā* or *Altair*, and the sun turned north in 50 days.

*Calculation of Date by the First Method.*

Before we can proceed with our calculation we note down below the mean celestial longitudes of the stars concerned for the year 1931.

Star.	Mean celestial longitude.
<i>Jyēsthā</i> or <i>Antares</i> .. ..	248° 47' 57"
<i>Kṛttikā</i> or <i>Alcyone</i> .. ..	59° 1' 44"
<i>Śravanā</i> or <i>Altair</i> .. ..	300° 49' 7"

(A) From the data (a) we assume as stated already, that the sun, the moon and the star *Antares* had the same celestial longitude at that new-moon.

Hence the present (1931) longitude of the sun at the new-moon at <i>Antares</i> ..	248° 47' 57"
Sun's motion in 81 days .. ..	79° 50' 3"
Hence the mean celestial long. in 1931 of the winter solstice of the year of the Bhārata battle .. ..	328° 38' 0" (1)
The celestial long. for 1931 of the summer solstice of the year of the battle ..	<u>148° 38' 0" (2)</u>

(B) From data (b), the moon at the assumed conjunction with *Kṛttikā* or *Alcyone* was 13 days old.

Hence the (1931) celestial longitude of the moon at that time was .. .. 59° 1' 44"

The moon was 13 days old and the mean synodic month has a length of 29·530588 da.,

∴ the moon was ahead of the sun by

$$\frac{360^\circ \times 13}{29 \cdot 530588} \text{ or } \dots 158^\circ 28' 41''$$

The sun's present-day (1931) celestial longitude for that time .. ..	260° 33' 3"
Sun's motion in 68 days .. ..	67° 1' 17"
∴ the present (1931) celestial long. of the winter solstice of the year of the Bhārata battle .. ..	327° 34' 20" (3)
The celestial long. for 1931 of the summer solstice of the year of the battle .. ..	<u>147° 34' 20" (4)</u>

(C) From data (c) the moon at our assumed conjunction with *Śravaṇā* or *Altair* was 31 days old.

Hence the present (1931) celestial longitude of the moon for that time ..  $300^{\circ} 49' 7''$

The moon was ahead of the sun by

$$\frac{360^{\circ} \times 31}{29 \cdot 530588} \text{ or } \dots \dots 377^{\circ} 54' 47''$$

The present (1931) celestial long. of the

sun for that time ..  $282^{\circ} 54' 20''$

Sun's motion in 50 days ..  $49^{\circ} 16' 50''$

Hence the 1931 celestial long. of the winter solstice for the year of the Bhārata battle .. ..

$$\underline{332^{\circ} 11' 10''} \quad (5)$$

The present celestial longitude of summer solstice of the year .. ..

$$\underline{152^{\circ} 11' 10''} \quad (6)$$

We thus arrive at three divergent values of the present (1931) celestial longitude of the summer solstice of the year of the Bhārata battle, viz. :

From data (a)	..	..	$148^{\circ} 38' 0''$
„ „ (b)	..	..	$147^{\circ} 34' 20''$
„ „ (c)	..	..	$152^{\circ} 11' 10''$
The mean of these values		..	$\underline{=149^{\circ} 27' 50''}$

Again the 1931 longitude of *Regulus* or

$$\underline{Maghā} \quad \dots \quad \dots \quad \underline{=148^{\circ} 52' 1''}$$

$$\text{The 1931 long. of } \underline{Kṛttikā} \text{ or } \underline{Alcyone} \quad \dots \quad \underline{=59^{\circ} 1' 44''}$$

$$\text{Difference} \quad \dots \quad \dots \quad \underline{89^{\circ} 50' 17''}$$

Thus at that time the summer solstitial colure passed through *Regulus* and the vernal equinox coincided with the ecliptic position of *Kṛttikā* or *Alcyone* very nearly. When these were exactly the case, it was an *astronomical event*, but our mean value of the present longitude of the summer solstice of the year of the battle shows that the *earthly event* was some years prior to it.

The mean precession rate from 2350 B.C. to 1931 A.D. =  $49'' \cdot 7882$  per year and the annual proper motion of *Regulus* =  $-0'' \cdot 2670$  per year. Hence the time of the astronomical event was 2350 B.C. (or more strictly 2349 B.C.). The year of the Bhārata battle from our mean position of the summer solstice calculated above, becomes 2370 B.C. This is our date by the first method. It is an approximate result because: (i) we have used the mean and not the apparent motion of the sun, and

(ii) we have made a very big assumption that the nearness of the moon to the several stars in the evenings to have been exact conjunctions, which perhaps were not the case with all or any of the three stars *Antares*, *Pleiades* and *Altair*. The date arrived at, however, shows the great antiquity of the event and must be correct within a hundred years.

#### THE SECOND METHOD.

On looking up some of the recent nautical almanacs, we find that a new-moon very nearly at the star *Antares* took place on :—

(1) December 1, 1929, at 4 hrs. 48.4 min. G.M.T. or at 9 hrs. 52.4 min. Kurukṣetra mean time.

The sun's longitude at G.M. midnight or

Kurukṣetra mean time 5 hrs. 4 min.

A.M. was .. .. 248° 19' 10"

The moon's longitude at that time .. 246° 4' 24"

The longitude of *Antares* .. 248° 46' nearly.

Hence December 1, 1929, was a new-moon day, conjunction taking place very near to *Antares*. It was the day of the new moon of which the presiding deity was Indra and the beginning of the synodic month of Agrahāyana. Thirteen days later was—

(2) Date, December 14, 1929, at 5-4 P.M. of Kurukṣetra mean time which corresponded with the eve of the first day of the Bhārata battle.

The sun's longitude .. .. 262° 1' 57".2

The moon's longitude .. .. 54° 40' 7".5

Longitude of *Kṛttikā* or *Alcyone* .. 59° nearly.

The moon came to conjunction with *Kṛttikā* or *Alcyone* in about 8½ hrs. more. In the evening at Kurukṣetra, the moon was about 3° behind the *Kṛttikās* visibly, due to the moon's almost horizontal position at sunset. Eighteen days later was—

(3) Date, January 1, 1930, and at 5-4 P.M. of Kurukṣetra mean time :

The sun's longitude .. .. 280° 22' 2".4

The moon's longitude .. .. 296° 47' 34".8

Longitude of *Altair* or *Śravaṇā* .. 300° 45' nearly.

The moon came to conjunction with *Altair* in 8 hrs. more. This evening corresponded with the evening on which the Bhārata battle ended. Fifty days later came—

(4) Date, 20th February, 1930, the day corresponding to that of Bhīṣma's expiry. At 5-4 P.M. of Kurukṣetra mean time :—

The sun's longitude	..	..	331° 8' 1".1
The moon's longitude	..	..	242° 40' 54".7

The moon had come to her last quarter at about 1½ hours before. The sun's longitude at 5-4 A.M. Kurukṣetra time of this date was 330° 37' 47".

If by this last basis we calculate the year of the Bhārata battle the time comes out to the 2456 B.C. This method evidently gives a more correct result, the difference is only 86 years. But we cannot be sure that 2456 B.C. was the real year of the Bhārata battle. We have now to examine if there is any tradition which supports either of the dates.

### THREE TRADITIONS AS TO THE DATE OF THE BHĀRATA BATTLE.

(1) There are at present known three orthodox traditions as to the date of the Bhārata battle, the first of which is due to Āryabhaṭa I (499 A.D.), who in his *Daśagīṭikā*, 3, says 'Of the present *Kalpa* or *Æon*, six *Manus*, 27 *Mahāyugas* and three quarter *yugas* elapsed before the Thursday of the Bhāratas'.<sup>1</sup> This is a simple statement that the Pāṇḍavas lived at the beginning of the astronomical Kali age or at about 3102 B.C.

(2) The second tradition recorded by Varāhamihira (550 A.D.) is ascribed by him to an earlier astronomer Vṛddha Garga (much earlier than Āryabhaṭa I). Varāha says 'The seven ṛsis were in the Maghās, when the King Yudhiṣṭhira was reigning over the earth; his era is the era of the Śaka king to which 2526 have been added'.<sup>2</sup> The first part of this statement has remained a riddle to all researchers up to the present time. The second part gives a most categorical statement that Yudhiṣṭhira became King in -2526 of Śaka era, which was 2449 B.C.

(3) The third tradition is due to an astronomical writer of the *Purāṇas*, who says, 'From the birth of Parikṣit to the accession of Mahāpadma Nanda, the time is one thousand and fifty years'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> काक्षीमनवोदसनयुगश्च गतास्ते च मनुयुगद्वयं च ।  
कल्पाद्विर्गुगपादा ग च गुरुदिवसाश्च भारतात् पूर्वम् ॥

*Daśagīṭikā*, 3.

<sup>2</sup> आसन् मघासु मुनयः शासन्ति पृथ्वीं युधिष्ठिरे वृषते ।  
षड्विकपञ्चद्वियुतः शककालस्य वाञ्छश्च ॥

*Brhatsamhitā*, XIII, 3

<sup>3</sup> यावत् परौक्षितो जन्म यावत् नन्दाभिषेचनम् ।  
खं वर्षसहस्रं तु ज्ञेयं पञ्चाशदुत्तरम् ॥

Pargiter's *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, page 58.

Now taking the accession of Chandragupta to have taken place in 321 B.C. and the rule of the Nandas to have lasted 50 years in all, the birth of Parikṣit according to the statement of this Purāṇic writer becomes about 1421 B.C.

Of these three traditions our finding of the date of the Bhārata battle, whether 2370 B.C. or 2456 B.C. approaches closest to the year -2526 of Śaka era or 2449 B.C. It is therefore necessary to examine the year -2526 of the Śaka era.

*Astronomical Examination of the year -2526 of Śaka era or 2449 B.C.*

We found before that in 1851 of Śaka era elapsed or 1929 A.D. the various 'conjunctions' of the moon with the sun and the several stars happened in closest coincidence with the *Mahābhārata* references.

From -2526 to 1851 elapsed of the Śaka era, the number of years was 4,377. We shall assume that these were sidereal years.

$$\text{Now, } \frac{\text{Sidereal year}}{\text{Sidereal month}} = \frac{365.25636}{27.32166}$$

$$= 13 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{1} + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{12} + \frac{1}{1} + \frac{1}{7} + \frac{1}{9} + \dots$$

$$\text{The convergents are } 13, \frac{27}{2}, \frac{40}{3}, \frac{107}{8}, \frac{254}{19}, \frac{2139}{160}, \frac{25922}{1939}$$

etc. The last three convergents calculated by us give the luni-solar cycles of 19, 160 and 1,939 years in which the moon's positions with respect to the sun and the stars repeat themselves.

Here we have  $4377 = 1939 \times 2 + 160 \times 3 + 19$ .

It is thus concluded that the various conjunctions which happened in 1929 A.D. had repeated themselves also 4,377 years before. In fact we have,

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Sidereal year} \times 4377 &= 1598727.08772 \text{ da.}, \\ \text{Sidereal month} \times 58515 &= 1598727.016821 \text{ da.}, \\ \text{and Synodic month} \times 54138 &= 1598726.973144 \text{ da.} \end{aligned}$$

Thus from a consideration of the mean motions of the sun and the moon it is inferred as a certainty that the various 'conjunctions' of the moon with the sun and the stars recorded in the *Mahābhārata* did actually happen in -2526 of Śaka era. We now proceed to examine the year more closely by a consideration of the apparent positions of the sun, moon and stars, on the days indicated by the *Mahābhārata* references.

The number of days elapsed from January 1, Greenwich mean midday of 1900 A.D. to December 1, Greenwich mean midday of 1929 A.D. = 10926 days. In 4377 sidereal years, the number of mean solar days = 1598727 days as shown above. Hence the number of days between January 1, of 1900 A.D.

Greenwich mean midday to the day of the new-moon at *Antares* in -2526 of Śaka era = 1587801 days.

Now the mean tropical places at 1587801 days before January 1, 1900 A.D., Greenwich mean midday or the Kurukṣetra mean time 5 hrs. 4 min. P.M. were the following for :—

Sun	..	..	..	189° 25' 33".95
Sun's apogee	..	..	..	27° 38' 55"
Moon	..	..	..	192° 8' 37".80
Moon's apogee	..	..	..	8° 37' 16".3
Moon's node	..	..	..	103° 9' 52".65
Eccentricity of the sun's orbit	..	..	..	·018342

We have calculated these mean places and the eccentricity of the sun's orbit according to the astronomical constants as given on pages XII and XVI of the *Connaissance Des Temps* for the year 1931. The authority for the sun's elements is *Ann. del'Obs. de Paris : Mem., t. IV*, while that for the moon's is *Ann. du Bureau des Longitudes, t. VII, Paris, 1911*.

Hence we calculate to a fair degree of approximation that on the date and time stated above, the apparent longitudes of :—

Sun	..	..	..	188° 45' 13",
Moon	..	..	..	192° 43' 46",

while the longitude of *Antares* .. 188° 13' 19" nearly according to our calculation. Hence the new-moon had been already over by about 8 hours, and the sun and the moon were very near to *Antares* at the instant of conjunction.

*Thirteen days later* or on the eve of the first day of the Bhārata battle, the mean and the apparent longitudes were :—

	Mean.	Apparent.
Sun	.. 202° 14' 22".25	202° 2' 44"
Moon	.. 3° 26' 13"	4° 23' 6", at 5-4 P.M.

of Kurukṣetra mean time and of *Kṛttikā* or *Alcyone* the mean longitude was 358° 25' 9".

Here the conjunction with *Kṛttikā* had happened about 12 hours before. *Alcyone* of the star group *Pleiades* being about 6° behind the moon; both were visible by the naked eye. The battle began from the next morning, when the age of the moon became 13 days and 20 hrs. nearly, or by the Indian mode the fourteenth *tithi* of the bright half of the month was over, and the moon was near to *Aldebaran* or *Rohiṇī*.

In another 18 days or 31½ days after the new-moon at *Antares*, the longitudes were :—

	Mean.	Apparent.
Sun	.. 219° 58' 52"	220° 26' 0"
Moon	.. 240° 36' 44"	245° 51' 35" at 5-4 P.M., Kurukṣetra mean time.
<i>Altair</i>	.. ....	239° 28' 6"



according to our calculation. The moon's conjunction with *Altair* had happened 12 hours before. Hence the predicted place of the moon by Valadeva on the day of the mace-duel had come true in the morning. The battle which lasted exactly  $17\frac{1}{2}$  days, ended on this evening.

In fifty days more or  $81\frac{1}{3}$  days after the new-moon at *Antares*, the tropical longitudes were :—

	Mean.	Apparent.
Sun	.. $269^{\circ} 15' 48''$	$271^{\circ} 7' 58''$
Moon	.. $179^{\circ} 25' 55''$	$176^{\circ} 40' 55''$ at 5-4 P.M.

of Kurukṣetra mean time.

Thus the sun had turned north about 28 hours before and the moon came to her last quarter in about 9 hours. According to the Indian mode the 8th *tithi* of the dark half of the month had begun 3 hours before. Bhīṣma expired at about the time for which the longitudes have been calculated.

#### *The Actual Dates of the Bhārata Battle.*

Now comes the question of finding the actual days of the battle. From 1900 A.D. back to 2449 B.C. we take the mean length of the tropical year at 365.2423323 days. Hence 1587801 days = 4347 years + 93 days. So the year of the Bhārata battle becomes —2448 of the Christian era or 2449 B.C. Hence also—

	New style.	Old style.
(a) <i>The date of the new-moon at Antares was</i> ..	.. 30TH SEPT.	21ST OCT.
(b) <i>The battle began on</i> ..	.. 14TH OCT.	4TH NOV.
(c) <i>The battle ended on</i> ..	.. 31ST OCT.	21ST NOV.
(d) <i>Bhīṣma expired on</i> ..	.. 20TH DEC.	9TH JAN.
		2448 B.C.

We have extended the new style to so ancient a time as it helps us more easily to realize the season of the year in which the battle was fought.

It being settled that the Bhārata battle was fought in 2449 B.C. between the two dates found above, the tradition recorded by Varāhamihira becomes alone correct because it is supported by the *Mahābhārata* references. The other two traditions are not trustworthy. Again for an event for which the date is not actually recorded in a reliable historical work, no better evidences of date, than those used here, are possible. We now proceed to set forth other *Mahābhārata* references which corroborate our finding.

## OTHER MAHĀBHĀRATA REFERENCES.

In 2449 B.C. or the year of the Bhārata battle the mean longitude of:—

*Kṛttikā* (*Alcyone*) was =  $358^{\circ} 25' 9''$ , and  
of *Maghā* (*Regulus*) was =  $88^{\circ} 38' 21''$ .

Hence at this time the vernal equinox was very near to the ecliptic place of *Kṛttikā* and the summer solstitial colure nearly passed through *Maghā*. The full moon at the *Kṛttikās* (the harvest moon of that time) was the time of autumnal equinox and the full moon at the *Maghās* was the time of winter solstice. These times of *Viṣuva* and *Ayana*, as they were called, were regarded as of special merit for the performance of some religious rites in those days. In the *Mahābhārata* we get the following references to these full moons:—

‘The man who goes to Puṣkara specially at the full moon at the *Kṛttikās*, gets the blessed worlds for all times in the house of Brahmā.’<sup>1</sup>

‘A man may perform the *Agnihotra* sacrifice for a full hundred years or live for one full moon night at the *Kṛttikās* at Puṣkara: These two are of the same merit.’<sup>2</sup>

‘A man reaching a holy bathing place at the full moon at the *Kṛttikās* and the *Maghās*, gets the merit of having performed respectively the *Agniṣṭoma* and the *Atirātra* sacrifices.’<sup>3</sup>

‘At the full moon at the *Kṛttikās*, if a man should go to the bathing place called Urvaśī, and bathe in the Lauhitya (Brahmaputra), according to the *śāstric* rules, with a devoted or prayerful mind, he would get the religious merit of having performed the *Puṇḍarīka* sacrifice.’<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> कार्त्तिकीं तु विशेषेण योऽभिगच्छति पुष्करम् ।

प्राप्नुयात् स नरो लोकान् ब्रह्मणः सद्नेच्छयान् ॥

Book III, Ch. 82, 31-32.

<sup>2</sup> यस्तु वर्षशतं पूर्णमग्निहोत्रमुपासते ।

कार्त्तिकीं वा वसेदेकां पुष्करे सममेव तत् ॥

Book III, Ch. 82, 36-37.

<sup>3</sup> कृत्तिकामघयोश्चैव तीर्थमासाद्य भारत ।

अग्निष्टोमतिरात्राभ्यां फलमाप्नोति मानवः ॥

Book III, Ch. 84, 51-52.

<sup>4</sup> उर्वशीं कृत्तिकायामे गत्वा चैव समाहितः ।

होतव्ये विधिवत् स्नात्वा पुण्डरीकफलं लभेत् ॥

*Anuśāsana* or Bk. XIII, Ch. 25, 46.

'At Prayāga (the confluence of the Ganges and the Jamuna) at the full moon at the *Maghās*, three crores and ten thousand holy waters meet.'<sup>1</sup>

All these references first corroborate the result obtained as to the date of the Bhārata battle, secondly to the fact that in the ancient history of Hindu India, there was undeniably a time when the vernal equinoctial point passed through the ecliptic position of *Kṛttikā* or *Alcyone* and the summer solstice passed through the star *Maghā* or *Regulus*, the mean date for which we have found already, was 2350 B.C.

#### THE DATE OF THE BHĀRATA BATTLE AND THE ANTIQUITY OF VEDIC LITERATURE.

The date of the Bhārata battle or the time of the Pāṇḍavas is very important, because Janamejaya Pārīkṣita is mentioned in both the *Aitareya* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇas*, as to have performed the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice with the help of his priest Tura Kāvaṣeya.<sup>2</sup> Now this Janamejaya Pārīkṣita was undoubtedly the great-grandson of Arjuna, the third Pāṇḍava. Arjuna is mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>3</sup> so also is mentioned Bharata, the son of Duṣmanta who was an ancestor of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. The name Dhṛtarāṣṭra Vaicitra-vīrya is also found in Vedic literature.<sup>4</sup> Again Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, is mentioned in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*.<sup>5</sup> Again Tura Kāvaṣeya, the priest of Janamejaya, was in one line the first teacher of the *Upaniṣads*.<sup>6</sup> Weber has said that the Mahābhārata sāga (not the epic) in its fundamental parts extends to the *Brāhmaṇa* period.<sup>7</sup> Now that we have established that the Bhārata battle was fought in 2449 B.C. we can form an idea of the beginning and the end of the period in which the Vedic literature was developed. In a paper named 'Age of the *Brāhmaṇas*', published in the Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta, September, 1934, I have, I trust, successfully established that the superior limit to the *Brāhmaṇa* period of ancient Indian History was 3100 B.C., while the lower limit was something like

1 दशतीर्थसहस्राणि तिस्रः कोट्यस्यथापरा ।

समागच्छन्ति माघ्यां तु प्रयागे भरतर्षभ ॥

*Anuśāsana* or Bk. XIII, Ch. 25, 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, IV, K. VIII, 21; also *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII, Kāṇḍa V, 4, 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, II, K. I, 2, 11.

<sup>4</sup> *Kāthaka Samhitā*, X, 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*, III, Kāṇḍa 17.

<sup>6</sup> *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, X, concluding lines, and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣat*, Ch. 6. It may be doubted from this if the *Gītā* of 18 chapters was an integral part of the original Mahābhārata and the Bhārata.

<sup>7</sup> Hopkin's Great Epic of India, page 386.

2000 B.C. Our date of the Bhārata battle shows that the Brāhmaṇas were begun before the time of the Pāṇḍavas and completed after their time. The advanced *Upaniṣads* very probably belong to the post-Pāriksita period, but the lower limit to the time of development of this type of literature was nearly the same as that of the *Brāhmaṇas*.<sup>1</sup>

### CONCLUSION.

We have thus come to the most definite conclusion that the Bhārata battle did actually take place in —2526 of Śaka era or 2449 B.C. For one single event only one date is possible. I trust, the problem of finding this date from the Mahābhārata data, has been solved in this paper for the first time. The date arrived at makes the event as contemporary with the Indus valley civilization. In the *Mahābhārata* we get many references to show that *Rākṣasas*, the *Asuras* and the Aryan Hindus had their kingdoms side by side. In *Vana-parva* or Book III, Chapters 13–22 give us a description of the destruction of Saubha Puri by Kṛṣṇa. This may mean the destruction of a city like Mahenjo Dāro. The Bhārata battle was a pre-historic event and the Purāṇic dynastic lists relating to this period cannot be taken as correct. They are mere conjectures and can be accepted only when they can be verified from other more reliable sources. There are undoubtedly several gaps in these lists which have yet to be accounted for. In many cases wrong traditions may be found repeated in many books; they all may be echoes of one statement and are not acceptable. Not such are the *Mahābhārata* references which we have collected from the *Udyoga* to the *Anuśāsana-parva*. I trust my thesis stands on solid astronomical basis selected with the greatest care and discrimination. The misinterpretations of the commentator have been, on some occasions, confounding for a time.

The historical methods are often liable to very serious errors by wrong identification of persons from a similarity of names. The astronomer Parāśara, probably a man of the first and second centuries, was wrongly identified with Parāśara, the father of Vyāsa the common ancestor of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas by the earliest researchers, Sir Wm. Jones, Wilford and Davis.<sup>2</sup> They based their calculation on the statement of this Parāśara,

<sup>1</sup> A *Bhāgavata Upaniṣat*, viz., the *Maitrī Upaniṣat*, states the position of the summer solstice at the beginning of the nakṣatra *Maghā*, for which the time is about 1900 B.C., vide the *Maitrī Upaniṣat*, VI, which is given from an earlier work. It has not been possible to find out that earlier work.

<sup>2</sup> *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. II, etc., cf. also Brennand's Hindu astronomy, Ch. IX, pp. 112–125.

the astronomer, as to the position of the solstices ; their calculation has but given an approximate date of an astronomical event but neither the time of the Pāṇḍavas nor of the astronomer Parāśara. Such mistakes have been made by many subsequent researchers, who have used the sameness or similarity of names as a basis for a historical conclusion. Not such are the astronomical references used in this paper. They are all definite in meaning and, as I have said already, for an event of which the date is not recorded in a reliable historical work, no better evidence of date is possible. Our examination in the light of these references fully corroborates the date recorded by Varāhamihira whose statement must now be regarded as more reliable than those of the host of the writers of the Purāṇas of unknown name and time.

I have great pleasure in acknowledging that Mr. Nirmal Chandra Lahiri, M.A., has helped me in revising some of the astronomical calculations of this paper. I shall be very grateful indeed to any reader for any corrections and suggestions.

---



# INDEX

JOURNAL ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL. LETTERS

VOLUME III, 1937

## A

- Abū Nukhailah, a post-classical Arab poet, 55.  
 Abu's-Simţ Marwān b. Abī Hafṣah, a post-classical Arab poet, 71.  
 Acharya, G. V. Two notes on Western Kshatrapa coins and on Valabhi coins, N. 95.  
 —and Gyani, R. G. Resumé of numismatic research in India, N. 7.  
 Altekar, A. S. Attribution of the Chandragupta-Kumaradevi type, N. 105.  
 Andhra coin, N. 93.  
 Angivanam, Jewish principality at, 8.  
 Apilaka, Andhra ruler, N. 93-4.  
 Ardeshir II, coin of, N. 43.  
 Astronomical references from Mahabharata, 101.

## B

- Banerji, A. C. Buddha image from Kurkihar, 53.  
*Ba'r* or *Ba'ar*, a game, 97.  
 Bhārata battle, data for the calculation of the date of, 108; three traditions as to the date of, 112; date of the Bharata battle and the antiquity of Vedic literature, 117.  
 Bhasa, coin of, N. 43.  
 Bhattacharyya, P. N. Location of land donated by Nidhanpur grant, 45.  
 Bhīṣma's death, day of, and the *Ekāṣṭakā*, 107.  
 Black Jews, 2.  
 Buddha image from Kurkihar, 53.  
 Buddhabala, coins of, N. 42.  
*Buqairā*, a game, 98.

## C

- Chakravarti, S. N. Sculptured lintel of Gupta date from Sarnath, 39.  
*Chess*, a game from China or India, 100.  
 Child-world and the child of Araby, 91.  
 Chinese and contemporary historians, on Kidara and the Little Kushans, N. 24.  
 Coins of Kidara and the Little Kushans, N. 23.  
 Coins of the Little Kushan rulers and satraps, stylistic comparison of, N. 46.  
 Coins of the Sultans of Malwa: Akbar, N. 138; Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, N. 133; Baz Bahadur, N. 137; Ghiyas Shah, N. 123; Hoshang Shah, N. 121; Mahmud Shah I, N. 122; Mahmud Shah II, N. 129; Muhammad II, N. 133; Muhammad Adil, N. 136; Muhammad Shah I, N. 121; Nasir Shah, N. 127; Qadir Shah, N. 135; Qadir Shah (Mahmud III of Gujarat), N. 135.  
 Copper coinage of Kumaragupta I, N. 113.  
 Cranganore, Jewish Kingdom at, 1.

## D

- Da Cunha, Dr. J. Gerson, a coin collector, N. 142-4.  
 Dayal, P. Two gold coins of Siddharaja (Jayasimha), N. 117.  
 De Paiva, M. P., on Cochin Jews, 10.  
 Dikshit, K. N. New Andhra coin, N. 98.



Dinajpur District, rural customs of, 33.

*Duwāmah* and *Falkah*, terms to represent spinning-tops, 97.

## E

*Ekāṣṭakā*, day of Bhīṣma's death and, 107.

## F

*Fanzaj*, a dance, 100.

*Fī'āl*, *Fiyāl*, *Fayāl* and *Mufāyalah*, terms to represent a game, 98.

## G

Ghose, A. Rare copper coinage of Kumaragupta I, N. 113.

Gold coins of Siddharaja (Jayasimha), N. 117.

Guthrie, Col. C. Seton, a coin collector, N. 141.

Gyani, R. G. See Acharya, G. V., and Gyani, R. G.

## H

Harley, A. H. Abū Nukhailah, a post-classical Arab poet, 55.

—Abu's-Simṭ Marwān b. Abī Ḥafṣah, a post-classical Arab poet, 71.

—Child-world and the child of Araby, 91.

## I

Industries of Dinajpur, 34.

## J

Jews of Cochin, racial affinities of, 1; racial status of, 4; anthropological study of, 13.

## K

*Kharīj* or *Kharāj*, a guessing-game, 99.

*Khudhrūf*, a spinning-top, 96.

Kidara, coins of, N. 39.

Kidara and the Little Kushans, coins of, N. 23.

Kumaragupta I, copper coinage of, N. 113.

Kurkihar, Buddha image from, 53.

## L

Little Kushan rulers and satraps, stylistic comparison of the coins of, N. 46.

Little Kushan silver and copper coins, notes on finds and find-spots of, N. 48.

## M

Macfarlane, E. W. E. Racial affinities of the Jews of Cochin, 1.

Magical customs and beliefs of Dinajpur, 37.

Mahabharata, astronomical references from, 101; time references from, 102; references to some full moons in, 116.

Mālpāhārīās, social groups, 25; society, 26; crimes, 26; government, 26; kinship system, 27; birth, 29; name-giving, 29; marriage, 30; death and funeral rites, 31.

Menumitted or Brown Jews, 3.

Martin, M. F. C. Coins of Kidara and the Little Kushans, N. 23.

## N

*Nard*, a game from Persia, 100.

Nidhanpur grant, location of land donated by, 45.

Numismatic research in India, résumé of, N. 7.

Numismatic Society of India, awards instituted by, N. 10.

Numismatic Supplements 33-47, index to, N. i-xiv.

## P

Piroch, coins of, N. 42.

Prasad, D. Observations on different types of silver punch-marked coins, their periods and locale, N. 51.

## Q

*Qirq*, a square-game, 100.

## R

Racial affinities of the Jews of Cochin, 1.

Rajbangshis, position of women among, 34.

Raktika or Kṛṣṇala, the ancient Indian standard weight, N. 87.

Ratan Narain collection of coins, N. 144.

Resumé of numismatic research in India, N. 7.

*Rihān*, a sport, 99.

Rural customs of Dinajpur District, 33.

## S

Sadhani, coins of, N. 44.

Sarkar, S. S. Social institutions of the Mālpāhārīās, 25.

Sarnath, sculptured lintel of Gupta date from, 39.

Sculptured lintel of Gupta date from Sarnath, 39.

Sen, K. K. Rural customs of Dinajpur District, 33.

Sengupta, P. C. Astronomical references from Mahabharata, 101.

Shapur III, coins of, N. 45.

Siddharaja (Jayasimha), gold coins of, N. 117.

Silver punch-marked coins, their periods and locale, N. 51, 71.

Singhal, C. R. Certain unpublished coins of the Sultans of Malwa, N. 119.

—Index to Num. Suppl. 33-47 in J.R.A.S.B., 1919-38, N. i-xiv.

Social institutions of the Mālpāhārīās, 25.

*Suddar*, a game, 100.

## T

Tarika, coins of, N. 44.

*Tathth*, a game, 100.

## U

*Umbūthah*, a game, 99.

## V

Valabhi coins, notes on, N. 95; legend on, N. 99.

Varahran, coins of, N. 41.

Varo Shahi, coins of, N. 41.

Vedic literature, antiquity of, 117.

Village customs of Dinajpur, 34.

## W

Western Kshatrapa coins, notes on, N. 95.

White Jews, 1, 6; peculiar customs, 11; physical anthropology, 16.

Whitehead, R. B. Three coin collections, N. 139.

## Z

Zabuli tribe, a branch of the White Huns, N. 35.

